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FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF SPORT

FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF SPORT

BY

JAMES HENRY CORBALLIS

EDITED BY

ARTHUR T. FISHER

(Major late 21st Hussars)



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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

THE task of editing the following pages has been a very pleasurable one to me, and I sincerely trust that their perusal may prove equally so to the reader.

An editor is, at the best, but the mouthpiece of the author, and if I have failed to do justice to the MS. placed in my hands I must excuse myself on the ground of being rather soldier and sportsman than scribe.

I gladly take the opportunity thus afforded me of tendering my sincere thanks to Mr. F. H. Salvin, the author of 'Falconry in the British Isles,' for the very material assistance he has given me in the compilation of Part V. ; he has also very kindly lent some of the plates from that valuable work. My thanks are also due to Mr. Hutchinson for kindly overlooking the portion on 'Golf.'

It but remains for me to express my hope that the

volume thus 'outward bound' may experience a truly prosperous voyage, and meet with a cordial reception from those for whose behoof it has been written, and to subscribe myself

Their obedient servant,

THE EDITOR.

PREFATORY

‘WHEN a writer, whether of poetry or prose, first addresses the public, he has generally something to offer which relates to himself or his work, and which he considers as a necessary prelude to the work itself, to prepare his readers for the entertainment or the instruction they may expect to receive, for one of these every man who publishes must suppose he affords. This the act itself implies; and in proportion to his conviction of this fact must be his feeling of the difficulty in which he has placed himself: the difficulty consists in reconciling the implied presumption of the undertaking, whether to please or to instruct mankind, with the diffidence and modesty of an untried candidate for fame or favour.’—Crabbe’s Preface to ‘Tales of the Hall.’

The above quotation seems so exactly to express the situation in which I find myself placed, that I have selected it in preference to any words of my own by way of prefatory apology for the following pages, in the production of which I am actuated by the twofold desire to entertain and instruct those who may perchance peruse them. I desire to amuse those whom I should not presume to instruct, viz., those who are, or

have been, sportsmen, and I would aim at securing both instruction and entertainment for those who would be. This latter community have before them, I trust, a similar enjoyment of all the many pleasures which during forty-five years of a lifetime spent with horse and gun and rod have been vouchsafed to me; and in order that they may perhaps the more fully and readily realize those pleasures, I venture to offer for their help and guidance the experiences which I myself have gained during so many years passed in the pursuit of sport.

It is, however, rather for the benefit of those who are thus entering upon their career as sportsmen that I presume to offer my advice and experiences. I would have them be sportsmen 'good and true,' loving sport for sport's sake, able to discriminate between what is true and that which is illegitimate, and to hold in abhorrence anything which partakes of ruthless slaughter, or which in ever so little a degree savours of meanness or want of manliness, and as being utterly at variance with the truthful rendering of the name of sportsman.

The brotherhood which exists amongst all true sportsmen is one of no mean order, for whereas courage, self-control and endurance are necessary qualifications for membership, whatever is contrary to these virtues would at once serve to ensure expulsion from its ranks.

As I write, the well-remembered faces of many of those who have added lustre to the roll of British sportsmen, and who have had to relinquish their membership, called hence by the one inexorable foe, rise before me—many of them friends whom I loved

and honoured as they deserved ; and I cannot refrain from longing to reach out my hand to them and feel the warm responsive grasp of friendship as of yore, as face and form and voice are so vividly recalled to mind. At one time I see them again by the covert-side ; at another it is on the moorland, where the heather is mellowing and browning, and the hills look blue in the haze of an autumn day. Or it may be by the riverside, where the spring-water is foaming and boiling round the pool, that I recognise the well-known form of one who, with every muscle strained and sorely-tried rod, is striving to hold his own against the bold tactics of some fresh-run monster. Alas ! covert-side, moor and river will see them no more, but the healthy, manly influences they brought to bear on all with whom they ever came in contact still survive as a fitting monument to their memory.

Amongst those who still remain to grace our own immediate circle, I would here make mention of one who for upwards of fifty years as a horseman, and the staunchest supporter of sport we have ever had in Ireland, has worthily earned the title of ‘The Nimrod of Meath.’ I refer to Mr. J. J. Preston, of Bellinter, Co. Meath. It is to him, whom I so honour and respect, I dedicate this book.

Mr. Preston’s horses were notoriously perfect, and to obtain perfection he grudged no price. The celebrated mare Brunette—perhaps the best horse ever known in Ireland—belonged to him, and he himself steered her to victory over many a stiff course. She was by Sir Hercules, dam by Yeoman, g.-dam by Sir Walter.

During her racing career, which commenced in 1841

and ended in 1846, she won the following races for her sporting owner, who himself rode her :

1. The Gold Cup at Trim, three years running.
2. The Challenge Cup, Mullingar, three years running.
3. The Kilrue Cup, three years running.
4. Fox-hunters' Plate, Ormonde, King's Co., three years running.
5. New Stakes at Cahir, two years running.
6. Grand Handicap, Worcester.
7. Grand Handicap, Hereford.
8. Bellinter Cup, Trim.
9. Race at Dunboyne.
10. Sweepstakes near Dublin.
11. Steeplechase, Cashel.
12. Ashbourne (two races).

Total, 22 wins.

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PART I.—HUNTING.

CHAPTER I.

The hunting-field as a school—Qualifications necessary for riding to hounds—Learning to ride—Ponies for children—Stirrup-leathers not to be used for children learning to ride—Encouragement of nerve and confidence in children learning to ride—Knock-kneed children—Value of learning to ride without stirrups—Avoidance of damage when falling—Riding without saddles—Irish lady riders—Miss Bellew—Empress of Austria and Queen of Naples—The art of falling—American Guacho system of learning to fall—Use of too short stirrup-leathers—Learning to fall; size of stirrup-irons—Danger of riding in too short leathers—Reliance on stirrups dangerous—Loss of stirrup-leathers—Patrick Caffrey—Strained groin and its avoidance—Riding without judgment—Accidents to author—Proposed school for instruction in falling—Confidence gained by learning how to fall—Injury to horses' backs, and how to avoid it—Riding in a strange country where the banks are rotten—Boldness of young horses in flying fences.

IN the compilation of a book on sport such as the present, some one sport must 'lead the van,' and since the 'pride of place' is by common accord so worthily ceded to 'Hunting,' it is but fitting, therefore, that that sport should form the subject of our first consideration.

We Britons not unjustly pride ourselves, not only on our inborn pluck, but also on the superior quality of our horses, and our ability to ride them. Nor is

such pride unwarrantable, for it is the possession of these advantages which has made our English cavalry what it is, and has earned for us the admiration and respect of all other nations. We have in a very great measure to thank the hunting field for our supremacy in this respect ; for although the actual rank and file may not have the advantages of training therein, those who lead them have ; nor can there be any school which is so well calculated to bring out and mature the good qualities of horse and man as riding to hounds. Activity, nerve, and intelligence are all requisite, and to a very marked degree, to enable a man and horse to live the pace when hounds are running over a country. Nor will the possession of these three qualities alone be found sufficient, for they must be further supplemented by the ability to use them fully, and such ability can only be secured by experience and practice. The horse must be trained and brought into a condition necessary to enable it to use its powers fully, and the man must be able to avail himself of the powers of the animal ; and this latter he cannot do unless he can ride, and has the experience requisite to use them aright, and to the best advantage both of himself and his horse.

Now, since it is a well-known axiom that ‘we must learn to walk before we can hope to run,’ so is it equally indisputable that before a man can attempt to follow hounds on horseback he must learn to ride ; nor can the tuition which is necessary for the acquisition of such an accomplishment be commenced much too early in life. I do not wish it to be inferred that I am an advocate for children being taught to ride too early, because I consider that as children vary so much

in constitution and strength, it is well-nigh impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule for the age at which they should commence; but I take it that as a rule they may be taken in hand when they are seven or eight years old, and I venture to assert that if the advice and instruction I give are followed out, children so instructed will learn to ride well and quickly.

A suitable pony must of course be obtained, one with good shoulders, and not too rotund. A well-bred pony is the best for the purpose, but it must be quiet and reliable. It is a great mistake to put children on to ponies which are too wide for them. The saddle should be soft and padded. At the first lessons the child should be held on by two assistants, one on either side, each grasping a knee and pressing the legs to the saddle. If the animal is not too round, the child will be able to obtain a firmer grip, which will by degrees become instinctive; but I maintain that a good seat is better acquired without the aid of either stirrup leathers or irons. I cannot too strongly condemn the use of these in teaching children to ride. They learn to trust too much to them for support, and an unreliable seat is acquired, and habits which are most difficult to eradicate in after-life. The style of seat so induced is the very reverse of what it should be, and subversive of that perfect command which should exist, and which alone enables a rider to escape the consequences of many a serious fall. I lay great stress on the necessity for a child's pony being thoroughly quiet and free from tricks, for nothing can be more injurious to the nerves of a child than a fright or a fall, and I have known cases in which, through carelessness, children have been so frightened

that for years afterwards they could not be induced to mount a pony, and in one instance the child never quite recovered from the effect.

Confidence is the one thing which is of the very first importance ; this having been implanted in the child, the addition of constant practice will do more to complete the education than any theoretical instruction on the subject. By degrees the leg soon acquires the shape necessary to afford the grip required by the calf and the thigh, and a perfect seat may thus be secured without the aid of stirrups.

Even where children are at all inclined to be knock-kneed, the increase of such formation may be prevented by the use of the above method, though of course in such cases a little extra trouble and patience are necessary. I may say that I have known knock-knees made straight by a child having been taught to ride by this system ; but the practice must be constant, and the assistants must be taught to press the heels of the child (the toes being turned in) as closely as possible to the belly of the pony. Thus, in time the limbs will become sufficiently bowed to enable the child to ride quite as well as many children whose legs are properly shaped. The use of stirrups should be withheld until a perfect seat and proper command of the pony have been acquired. I have never known children cured of knock-knees in any one single instance in which stirrups have been allowed them, though I am fully aware that in many such instances they have learned to ride well in after-life ; but I have ever observed that people who have been so taught to ride invariably sustain more injury from falling than those who have been taught without

the use of stirrups. They are not able to clear themselves so quickly, nor can anyone who is conversant with such matters deny that reliance on stirrup-leathers is most fatal in the event of a fall. The most trifling delay, be it that of a second only, in freeing the feet from the stirrups, may often result in a rider being dragged or rolled over. The man who has learned to ride independently of stirrups can generally manage to free himself from his horse, and so avoid a bad accident, which he who has not so learned will probably sustain.

By the foregoing method of teaching children to ride, lightness and delicacy of handling are better acquired. A child instructed as I have advised may certainly be reckoned upon being able to ride really well in the course of four or five years. I have known children who were able to ride well to hounds by the time they were ten years old, and some whom it would be difficult to beat at twelve years of age, and whose performances fairly astonished some of the best of our veteran horsemen, and these children had all been taught to ride by this system.

When they are sufficiently advanced in their education, I consider that there is no better practice for children than learning to ride their ponies over hurdles without saddles.

Some of the best lady riders I have ever known learnt to ride by practising on donkeys over hurdles, without stirrups, and often without saddles. The seat and command which they thus acquired were so perfect that no men could beat them, and their quickness in getting clear of a fallen horse was marvellous. I seldom, if indeed ever, remember one of them being

hurt, though, whenever there happened to be 'a good thing,' they were always to be seen going in the front rank. One of them, a great friend of mine, was never defeated, but was always up at the 'death.' The Hon. Miss Bellew, of Barmeath, who had learned to ride in the way I have described, was, I consider, the very finest horsewoman in Ireland. No matter what country she was in, she picked her own line and went to the front, and invariably remained at the head of affairs throughout. When hounds were really 'going,' but very few could live with her. She not only required no assistance in the way of a pilot, but was herself as efficient a pilot as could be followed, for her judgment was never at fault in selecting the best line with hounds. Season after season told the same tale. Her name, however, is too well known to require any eulogy from me, further than to give her the place of honour amongst our Irish lady riders—at all events, in my estimation.

The Empress of Austria and her sister, the Queen of Naples, both learnt to ride in the same way, over hurdles without stirrups, and on saddles with the pommels made so as to be interchangeable, and thus allow of the horse being ridden on either side. The great difficulty in thus riding consists in bringing the shoulders as square to the horse on the one side as on the other. Such riding very much lessens the fatigue consequent upon riding over fences all day on the one leg. The change of sides also prevents a lady contracting a twist over in her figure to either side. This alone is an advantage, to say nothing of the rest to the rider, and the relief it must be to a tired horse to have the weight shifted to the other side.

I have also known the above-named ladies ride donkeys barebacked over hurdles.

If it is necessary to learn how to stick to the saddle, it is equally so to learn how to fall out of it, and this latter may, and should be, reduced to an art; but such can only be attained by constant practice. At no time can anyone be perfectly safe, and most of us have at one time or other had cause to thank Providence for many a hairbreadth escape; but comparative immunity from actual danger may be secured by constant practice in the art of falling when we are young. The practice of learning to fall over hurdles will prove invaluable in after-life, whether a fall be a slow one or the reverse. Even in racing, the knowledge of how to get clear of a rolling horse, and the power to do so instinctively, are of the greatest service.

The following is an extract from the letter of a correspondent to the *Field*: 'The South American Gauchos learn the art of falling in a much more dangerous fashion than falling over hurdles. They also begin young thus, as they earn their living on horseback. They ride long; the stirrup being a small one, only admitting the three larger toes, they cannot get hung up (as with our English ones); they ride on the balance, with long leathers, and body lying well back when at the gallop. Their method of practising the art of falling is a most dangerous one. The rider is put on a cheap horse, say worth a pound, the best ones being worth about six pounds. The noose of a sixty-yard lasso is tied to the fetlock of the near fore-leg round the pastern-joint. A Gaucho on foot holds the other end of the lasso. The rider forces his horse full gallop past the holder of the lasso, who, when he

sees the slack spun out, brings the horse to a complete somersault by a powerful jerk, the rider being spun off on to his feet, if he is efficient in the art of falling ; if not, he comes sometimes on his head, but generally manages to run off his horse, as it were, and gets some distance before he can stop, being in most cases quite free of the horse's fall.'

Some Englishmen of my acquaintance have learned the art in South America, but have not found it of much benefit when hunting in the shorter leathers used here on the English saddles. The greater perfection in the art is only learned by the system which I have described above, of riding over hurdles without stirrups, and either with or without saddles, which latter must very much depend upon the shape of the horse's shoulders.

The rider who uses leathers which are too short can never reckon on getting well out of a fall. I would have the reader remember that there is a great difference between the terms 'short' and 'shorter,' but in riding horses with bad (loaded) shoulders, the stirrups should be shorter than when riding a horse with a 'fine' shoulder. In the former case the weight of the rider is too far forward, and in the latter, if the weight is not placed in the right spot, it is too far back, and this undue distribution must very soon exhaust the jumping powers of a horse. Nor can anything be more liable to cause disaster than for the weight of the rider to be placed in the wrong position.

I have noticed that in the shires many men ride too short, from the mistaken idea that they can the more easily get out of a fall ; but the suddenness of the jerk in a fall is so great with short leathers, that a rider

must be sent either on to his head or shoulder, and rarely ever land on his feet, the irons on English saddles being placed so far forward.

I would recommend those who, having attained middle age, are desirous of learning how to fall safely, to always use stirrup-leathers of a medium length and suited to the shape of the horse they may be riding, to have the stirrup-irons made small enough to avoid the chance of the feet going too far through the irons, and to see that there is no possibility of the spur-strap catching in the iron above the instep. Then, with attention to these particulars, a balance which has been induced by practice, grip from knee and thigh, body inclining backward, natural resource, and an eye quick to detect the negotiable part of a fence (what is commonly termed 'an eye for a country'), broken bones will but rarely accompany a fall.

Many a man comes to terrible grief in a flying country from riding too short; for when a fall takes place he cannot (as I have remarked) have time to free his feet from the stirrups, but is thrown on to his head or shoulder, and is not infrequently hung up by the stirrup until too late to free himself from the falling horse. When stirrup-leathers are of a medium, comfortable length, the feet come out at once, and instead of the legs being cramped up, a man in falling will more generally land on his feet instead of on his head, and after his feet are freed from the stirrups, the pace will serve to swing him away from the falling horse; but if he is at all held by the stirrup, be it but for a second, the chances are that he may fall underneath his horse. The heavier the rider, the greater is the necessity that his weight should be placed correctly

on the horse's back, and the greatest care should be taken to see that the saddle is suitable and not too long, especially in the case of a man who is inclined to rely unduly on his stirrups. Indeed, any man who is given to place too much reliance on the support afforded him by his stirrups is not fit to hunt in any flying country. When once this habit has been contracted, there is well-nigh no cure for it ; at least, I never knew of such a case being cured. It stands to reason that if the weight is on the leathers it must be too near the shoulder, save in the case of some exceptionally well-shaped horses. Again, there is the danger of a leather breaking (and leathers so constantly strained must be more apt to break), in which case the rider must come down a real 'burster.'

On the other hand, with a firm grip from thighs and knees, the stirrup is no more than a support for the feet alone. I have myself often lost a leather and finished a long run without it, and such occurrences are by no means uncommon in racing. No reliance should be placed on the leathers when jumping, for the reasons I have quoted ; the weight of the rider being in the proper place, the horse is never unduly distressed, as would be the case if it were otherwise. I regard leathers as a necessary rest, but not as the only support to trust to when going fast or fencing. Thus, in a quick fall, if the pressure is on the saddle-flaps and not on the irons, a clear fall is almost a certainty, whereas if the pressure is on the irons, if a horse goes headforemost into a fence, the rider must sink with the fall and often be dragged, for the weight on the iron alone prevents his freeing his feet, and, as I have before observed, a second's delay may be fatal.

The experience which I gained from being taught how to fall when a child has been of the very greatest service to me, and I have met many people who were 'past masters' in the art of falling. Amongst these latter, a man I had as trainer and stud-groom often astonished us by the extraordinary facility he possessed of falling on his feet, and being able to clear himself from his horse even in the very worst falls. He was universally acknowledged to be one of the finest horse-men of his day. I regret to say he met his death owing to a bad kick from a three-year-old, which fell back in taking an up-bank which it had no idea of how to negotiate properly, and so he came to an untimely end after a career of twenty-five years. During the long time he was in my service previously to this he had never sustained any injury, and had the most marked, even brilliant, success during that period with the hunters and steeple-chasers entrusted to him. Patrick Caffrey (for such was his name) was well known with the Ward, Meath, Louth, and Kildare hounds, and for many years was my most faithful servant, and one of the very best trainers of a horse I have ever known. No matter what horse he might be riding, whether a young one or not, he was always with hounds, whether whipping-in to my harriers, or riding to either of the above-named packs. His natural resource, and ready eye for the practicable part of a fence, gave him the advantage over the rest of us in a 'quick thing,' and, in my estimation certainly, he was the finest horse-man of his day.

To show how little he depended on his stirrup-leathers, I have often seen him, his horse lying on its back, coolly standing beside him, without having

fallen ; and when he had satisfied himself that his horse was unhurt, after it had risen, he would vault on its back and gallop off.

I have constantly seen him vault on his horse's back as the latter was galloping off, and take the next fence before he had time to put his feet into the stirrup-irons. Sometimes, when he had lost a stirrup, I have seen him going away in front just as if nothing had happened. Those who are accustomed to the support of a stirrup will know what it feels like to have to ride over fences without one, and I have known cases in which, after such a mishap, men have been stiff and strained in the groin for a week, by reason of the unequal strain given to the groin on that side. I have often lost a stirrup out hunting, and on one occasion did so during a very long run with stag-hounds, of some thirty miles over a heavy, stiff country, and I most certainly should have felt the effects of it had I not several times dropped my other foot out of the stirrup and ridden without any stirrups at all, and by so doing I avoided the extra strain on the one groin. However, nothing ever seemed to affect Caffrey, he was always in such splendid condition ; and the constant practice he had in falling, and jumping on and off his horses when training them, tended to make him one of the most active men over a country I have ever known. I have known him ride horses, the most inveterate devils, without a saddle, which no one else could ride with one, and he stuck to them until he conquered them. If a horse reared with him, he would slip off like lightning, and with his left hand pull the horse over on to his back with a jerk of the bridle.

This invariably stopped a horse's rearing propensity at once and for ever. He certainly carried the art of getting clear from a falling horse to the greatest perfection. It is a pity that young people do not more generally practise this, for I maintain that it is invaluable, despite the opinions of many well-known horsemen to the contrary. Rough-riding, with little or no judgment, is far too frequently the 'order of the day.' Doubtless there are many such hard-riding men who get through many a 'good thing' without harm, but such chance-work must sooner or later end in woe. How very few there are of these who escape a really serious fall now and again! If, however, the subject of falling is treated scientifically, anything like serious damage may be prevented. I speak from my own experience, which extends over a great number of years, and I can only remember getting but two bad falls, both of which I can account for. One was due to riding a blind horse, and the other (a somewhat singular case) from riding a horse which turned out to be a 'fool'; *i.e.*, the horse was actually wrong in the head from a malformation, and this was not discovered until several professional jockeys and others had been also damaged in the same unaccountable way, as the horse had a habit of at times falling over the most trivial fences.

'Practice makes perfect,' and I should be only too happy to give my support to a school where falling could be taught on scientific principles to the young and active. Quiet cobs or ponies could be used over low hurdles and every sort of fence. With such practice, it is wonderful how instinctively a rider learns to know what sort of a fall he is in for, and he is ready

in a second to get to the right or left of the falling horse, and utilize the swing of the pace to free him either to the front over his horse's head, or to the one side or the other, as may be required.

This practice begets a feeling of confidence which enables a man to keep his wits about him when in the most serious difficulties, and to coolly survey the fence he is about to attempt. In the case of a slow fall, I have been able many a time not only to avert injury to myself, but also to my horse, especially when a ditch has been dangerous and the bank as narrow as the back of a knife. No fall over any description of fence is so likely to damage a horse's back as one over these deceptive narrow banks. Such banks often appear sound, and broad enough for a horse to kick-back or change his legs on them; but very often they are hollow, and worn away on the ditch side from the floods, and the consequence is that if a horse trusts to his kick-back to get him over, he must come to grief, be he ever so good a bank-jumper. Even supposing that he has what is termed 'a leg to spare,' if the rider is not off quick enough, the horse often sustains injury by reason of the weight being suddenly shifted on to his hind-quarters when the bank gives way, and in this manner a strained or 'ricked' back may take place without the rider being aware of it. Many a good horse has thus broken its back at the next fence.

I would very strongly advise anyone who finds himself riding in a strange country, where the banks are rotten, to watch the tactics of some good man in front of him, who knows the country, and he will thus be able to form a tolerable idea how to negotiate the

fences, for he will be able to see how his leader gets over, if with a scramble or otherwise ; if the former, he must collect his horse, and make him fly it, as the usual cause of a scramble is a rotten bank, which must be either cleared or taken off from behind it. Young horses generally take this sort of fence better than those more trained, as they are freer (less 'sticky,' as it is termed), and those which are inclined to be over-trained kick-back at everything, no matter what it may be, whether walls, timber, or gates, etc.

CHAPTER II.

Training and conditioning of hunters — Mannering of hunters — Riding too fast at fences — Jumping from a stand — Mr. Morrogh's horses — Rushing horses at fences — Training horses to jump — Qualifications necessary for a horse-trainer — Favourite terrier belonging to author — Intelligence of horses — Affection of horses for their masters — Clever mare belonging to author — Riding through a run without reins — 'A risky performance' — Mr. Kennedy's mare — Why horses come to grief — Mr. Linde's horse Too Good — Cleverness of Irish horses — Riding for sale inimical to sport — Horse-dealing masters of hounds — Hunting to ride and riding to hunt — Trials of temper to an M.F.H. — Monster meet of Meath hounds in Kildare — Mr. Pailly's performance on Shylock — The light division — Sport spoilers — Orderly fields — Sporting farmers — Lifting hounds — Low-hounds for cold-scenting countries — Casting forward — Casting back — Cunning of vixen — Greyhound foxes — Size and voracity of greyhound foxes — A hoary scoundrel — Greyhound foxes imported into Ireland — Extraordinary run with Meath with greyhound fox — Advantages and peculiarities of greyhound foxes — Preservation of greyhound foxes — Greyhound foxes not to be overpressed at first — Mr. S. Reynell on greyhound foxes — Anecdotes of foxes by Donald McTavish — An old fable — The tame fox and the Irish hen-wife.

IT is not sufficient for a man who aspires to be a hunting man to be only a horseman, and no more than that. The knowledge of the best way of managing and conditioning his horses is very necessary. A horse, to do his best for his master, must be fit to go, *i.e.*, in the very highest possible condition into which he can be brought. For my own part, I advocate the old fashion of giving a horse three doses of medicine

before I attempt to 'condition him.' This should be followed by plenty of exercise, both at a walk and a canter, daily, for at least two months before the first advertised meet. Cub-hunting is most useful for the purpose of getting horses, young ones especially, into order, but on no account should young horses be taken into a crowd before their jumping education is completed. It is most unwise to attempt to educate horses over fences where their full attention cannot be secured, and this is not likely to be the case when there are other horses galloping, and knocking about, and refusing. All jumping education must be carried out as quietly as possible, and I do not consider that the hunting-field is at any time the proper place for such instruction. Cub-hunting is an excellent opportunity for teaching a horse manners and for getting him into condition, nor can there be any better mode of effecting these, unless the owner may happen to possess a pack of beagles or small harriers, which he can use privately and without drawing a crowd of people after them. The training and exercise so gained for the horse will not be without its advantages to the owner also, for he himself will be also getting into the condition which it is necessary for him to attain if he would do justice to himself and his horses.

I think I may safely assert that by far the greater number of accidents are caused through the fault of the rider rather than the horse. As a rule men are prone to ride a deal too fast at their fences, and this style of rushing does not give a horse time to collect himself, and the result is that he over-jumps, and getting soon 'pumped out,' comes to grief. Now, there is no necessity to ride over-fast at fences, for

horses can jump bigger and better when ridden at a moderate pace. I have myself trained many of my horses to jump so big from a stand, that they could accomplish fences which were impossible to fly, and in a close, cramped country such training is most invaluable.

The late Mr. Leonard Morrogh, the well-known master of the Ward, trained most of his horses to jump the most ugly and impossible-looking fences from a stand, and thus, even at the end of a long run, his horses were, comparatively speaking, fresh. Nor can anyone argue from the foregoing that the pace was ever slow. Whyte-Melville, in his 'Songs and Verses,' writes 'The tail of a comet's, a joke to the Ward.'

I took the hint from Mr. Morrogh's system, and in like manner trained my own horses, and produced many a slow-jumping 'wonder,' and in consequence saw the end of many a twenty-five-mile run. I have known as many as seven horses which were allowed to 'fly' their fences die after such a run, and some of them succumbed before we had gone many miles. Nearly every horse, if he is afforded time to collect himself, and is not distracted with whip and spur, will, if properly trained, know how best to 'take off' and 'land' safely.

It is often astonishing how well a horse can measure the distance to his 'take off,' if he is only allowed a chance of doing so, and not rushed at his fence. When he is over-hustled, his training and common sense suffer complete demoralization. 'Over-anxious-to-be-over' riders ruin more horses than enough. If a trained hunter is ridden fairly and temperately at his

fences, he will measure his stride and get his hind legs under him at the exact spot which is required to enable him to successfully negotiate the highest or widest fences. A horse reasons and knows from practice, a deal better than his rider can tell him, what he has to do and how best to do it without a fall. If, however, his attention is to be distracted by the use of whip and spurs, he can hardly be expected to think for himself as he should, and otherwise would, do.

Trainers of horses often experience much difficulty in inducing them to think for themselves, and look at and judge their fences, and as to where to place their feet; but I found that I was nearly always successful, even with the most nervous, high-mettled, star-gazing youngsters, by driving them before me in the wake of some well-trained old hunter or stable companion, which was ridden quietly over in front of them; and by adopting this system I was able to carry their fencing education well-nigh to perfection before they were ridden. As a rule they became most tractable, and we succeeded in bringing to a very high pitch of training many a horse which at first appeared a hopeless star-gazer, by thus driving him in the long ropes and with a 'dumb jockey,' and thus there was no interference by bad or nervous handling. If a horse is worth training at all, he is worth training well, and under the above system nearly absolute perfection may be attained.

A horse-trainer, to be successful, must possess the following qualifications, to wit, good temper, nerve, and good hands. I regret to say that the last-named quality is sadly exceptional. I have been very successful in training many animals, such as dogs, and I have also trained falcons; but I always derived

greater satisfaction in the case of horses, and I consider they possess as much sagacity as any animal if they are properly treated, and can evince quite as much affection as a dog. I have had horses so handy that they could do almost anything but speak. I have at the present time a favourite terrier which *can* speak. That is to say, he can say 'How are you?' in three different keys, and this is a fact which is well known to many of my friends. I am free to admit that some horses have cost me much patience and trouble to train, but a naturally clever horse can be taught to do nearly anything, and the more it is taught the more easily it masters each new task. The love of horses for music is indisputable and well substantiated, and I may add that for 'the music of the hounds' it is excessive.

Horses learn to know and love the voice of their masters, and I have had some which, when they heard my voice, would try to break out of the stable with delight, and yet which would take no notice of grooms or strangers, proving that they can reason; and I have no doubt but that they recognise in their master the one person who gives them the greatest pleasure, not only when exercising them, but galloping them with the hounds they love so well. I once possessed a mare which was so trained that she used to follow me about like a dog anywhere and over anything. When breaking up a fox, a hare, or saving a deer, she would stand quietly by, alone and unheld. She thoroughly enjoyed the sport, and took it as a matter of course that her place was with the pack and that she formed one of them, and nothing would induce her to leave them, for she loved being with them. After a long run she

would turn her head towards home and try to get the hounds (my own harriers) to go with her, but when they would not go, she would not leave them. As a rule, after the hare or fox had been broken up, if not over-done, she appeared always eager for another gallop, but when she was tired she invariably tried to go home.

Once, when hunting with the Meath hounds, I performed a somewhat foolhardy feat with this mare. The field were 'pounded' by a boggy river, the only way across which was by means of two planks, which were used for the purpose of wheeling barrows across. I dismounted, and she followed me over like a cat, much to the chagrin of many hard-riding men, who were forced to go a mile round and lost the rest of a good run.

I once rode this mare in a run for a bet, with the rein buckled round her neck instead of to the bit, and she carried me perfectly. As I had run the reins through the breastplate, I was able to get quite sufficient support without interfering with her wind-pipe in any way. One of the hardest men ever known in Ireland, Mr. Kennedy, of Fleemstown, Co. Dublin, had a wonderful mare which he always rode with the reins hanging quite loose on her neck. She was as clever as a cat, and could do anything without the help of reins, and nothing could beat her in a run. Even Mr. Leonard Morrogh (the Nimrod of Ireland) found it a difficult matter at times to live with this wonderful little mare. She could go down anywhere, and up anything, like a cat, her rider always allowing the reins to hang loose. She took her fences almost at a stand. The way she crossed a country was a sight worth seeing. It but

proved what I assert, viz., that men nearly always come to grief through injudicious meddling with their horses' mouths, and from nervousness, ignorance, rushing too fast at their fences, and, worst of all, bad hands. I am convinced that nine falls out of every ten in a flying country are brought about by the supposed, but mistaken help (?) given to trained horses by over-handling them. Strangers who go to a slow-fencing bank country also invariably come to grief from the same cause, viz., nervously meddling with their horses' mouths—than which nothing can be more detrimental to the safe negotiation of banks. Well-bred Irish hunters jump naturally, as was, for example, the case with Mr. Linde's celebrated horse *Too Good*, who the very first time of asking performed so perfectly over every fence on a course before the Empress of Austria, that her Majesty exclaimed, 'He is too good!' and from that incident he took his name.

Irish horses are as a rule clever enough, and will seldom put a foot wrong if they are left alone, but if interfered with at every fence, even in a flying country, they forget their training and become demoralized, generally owing to the ignorance of some bruising rider who is constantly coming to grief. Such men are often only showing horses off for sale, and are the greatest nuisances in the hunting-field, and when, as sometimes happens, a master of hounds takes to horse-dealing, good-bye to sport. I regret to say that such cases do occur now and again, and I wonder at times what is coming to the hunting world, and I long for the return of the days when hounds were the chief attraction, and when fields were limited to some fifty or sixty people, who came out to see them

work with little or no help, casting themselves, and accounting for their thirty-five or forty couple of foxes annually, their music alone being worth travelling a hundred miles to hear. The horse-dealing, galloping, lifting master of hounds is a nuisance to everyone except the racing men, who care nothing and know less about the beauty, science, and patience and perfection requisite to show what in its full and true meaning is termed 'hunting.' Alas! out of the hundreds who nowadays appear at some of the meets I know so well, how few are there who know anything at all about the real thing, and how many come only for the sake of showing off some spirited horse fit only for a rush in a race! In some packs I know of, the majority only go out nowadays to ride or to sell their horses, and in one pack the master was the worst of the lot, and was for ever bruising along to keep up the name of his horses, without regard to anything else. His unfortunate huntsman must often have felt that such a performance was not worthy of the name of 'sport,' but more suited to the racecourse, or a fox and a brace of greyhounds. However, as a rule, I am bound to admit that masters of hounds are genuine sportsmen, and a very trying time they have of it with the large fields of the present day, especially near towns. What a master has at times to put up with under such circumstances a genuine sportsman alone can realize. There is one consolation, however, and that is that the men who come out solely for the sake of riding and galloping about are nearly always the first to come to grief. What with runs spoiled by the wilful unruliness of the field, hounds ridden over, etc., a master's temper can indeed be sorely tried.

One of the largest meets I ever saw was in Kildare, when the Meath hounds were invited to hunt that county some years ago. There must have been nearly a thousand people out on that occasion. There were over seven hundred pink coats alone, besides some hundreds of black. Sam Reynell was at that time, as he had been for over fifty years, master of the Meath, and he generally contrived to keep his field in awe of him. Only three men were up at the finish, when Mr. Pailly, V.S., eclipsed them all by jumping the six-foot wall into Carton, the Duke of Leinster's property. It was the highest jump I ever saw at the end of such a 'quick thing,' and from the way in which his horse Shylock did it, he must have cleared fully seven feet, with the coping. As was his wont, Mr. Wakefield, the veteran sportsman of Kildare, was one of the three who saw the end of the run. On that day the veterans alone were up at the finish. But what became of the flash crowd which started I know not ; I can only conclude that they must have been lost in the bog.

The light division are generally the culprits who come out to ride and not to hunt. Being, as a rule, mounted on cheaper and inferior animals to the heavier men, they are sooner done with, especially when they take to jealous riding. The heavy men are obliged to ride carefully, or else they have very little chance of seeing the end of a really good run, and thus, being better mounted, they generally are in the majority at the end of a long run, especially when it is over a stiff country, in which case they ride slowly at their fences, whereas the 'harum-scarum,' rough-riding light-weights are nowhere. There are doubtless

many exceptions in which light-weights ride with as much judgment as the heavier lot, but what I wish to explain is that the light-weights are generally those who are guilty of over-riding hounds, etc., and spoiling sport. Even men who have hunted all their lives in the same country, and know every fence in it as plainly as if it were marked out on a racecourse, could never stay to the end of a good thing if they were to crack along in a reckless fashion, and I am quite sure no horse could stand it.

The small fields of former days, to which I have made reference, were doubtless most orderly, when compared with the enormous crowds which nowadays come out. The Meath hounds were at one time most fortunate in having very select fields, and they, together with the Louth, accounted for more foxes than many of the then other more fashionable packs.

At the present time, the enormous fields must try the masters much more than in former days, especially since the farmers themselves are not nearly as sporting a lot as they were twenty years ago. But I am glad to see that latterly things are beginning to mend somewhat, and there seems every chance of the farmers again taking to hunting as of old.

Where the field is under control, there is but rarely any necessity to 'lift' hounds, unless the country is a cold-scenting one. Nothing is more ruinous to hounds than the habit of lifting them constantly; but where, from the nature of the soil, it is necessary to do so, the lowest possible hounds should be used, with noses 'that would pick up scent in a road in the month of March.' I have always remarked that low hounds are the best for cold-scenting countries, and I have had many a

good run, and quite as fast, with hounds of this description as could be obtained by the use of those of greater height; and I am convinced that more foxes will be accounted for in such countries with low-sized, musical hounds than with the larger and more flashily bred ones. A slight dash of bloodhound cross is invaluable for such cold-scenting, non-holding countries.

As a rule, huntsmen are far too much addicted to casting forward without any reason, if scent suddenly fails, from a desire to get their hounds clear of the field. My advice is, if you wish to account for a dodging fox or hare, to be patient, lift hounds as little as possible, and work backward rather than forward. I have often, by using a back-cast when hunting a hare, found the latter lying in a tuft of grass a long way behind where the hounds 'threw up,' having returned on her 'foil,' and made a long spring from it into her 'seat.'

Foxes also often make use of extra cunning tactics, as is well known to be the case. I shall, however, make mention of one or two anecdotes later on, which, even if apparently exaggerated, I am quite inclined to believe, judging from the cunning displayed by a tame one which I kept for several years. I believe that they are as cunning as many human beings, and infinitely more so than any other animal which I ever met with.

I once watched a vixen teaching her cubs to hunt water-hens and rats (the cubs were then about two months old), and it was most interesting to notice the tactics she employed in getting down wind so as to avoid being scented or heard, and she accomplished her object just as scientifically as the wariest of stalkers

could do in trying to circumvent the 'monarch of the glen.'

I have had even more experience of the ways and habits of the 'greyhound' foxes of the Highlands than of our own little animals, which, as common poultry thieves, are not fit to be compared with the bold and noble 'greyhound' Highland foxes. I have known such foxes, and they still exist in one or two places in the Highlands, to be as large as any wolf I ever saw. I was obliged on one occasion to leave a hind, which I had shot, out during the night. The next day, when we went to get it, we found nothing left but the bones, which were scattered about all over the place, and I shall never forget the size of the tracks made by the foxes round the remnant of the carcase. They resembled the tracks of large dogs. We saw one of them disappearing over the hill, and it was as large as an average-sized greyhound, but its tracks were double the size of what a greyhound's would be. This fox is now nearly white. If I ever do get the chance of a shot at the hoary scoundrel I will most certainly send him to London, as a curiosity, for the benefit of some of my readers. I am quite sure that such foxes could not only kill a young fawn or a hind at any time of the year, but even a wounded stag, if driven to desperation by hunger. Until I saw them I never could have believed that such monster foxes existed. I sent some greyhound foxes to Ireland, and also some to England. I can only say, as regards those which were sent to Ireland, that they could not be caught, apropos of which I may mention that the Meath hounds ran one of those which we turned down in Kilcarty for five hours. If these large

foxes are allowed a year's 'jubilee,' they will fill out so strong as to be able to go thirty miles without any very great effort during the winter. Towards spring they get softer, and are often caught napping in the open.

The great advantage of these Highland greyhound foxes is that they very much resemble deer in their tactics of using the wind as a guide to safety, if they are allowed to do so, and are not too much pressed at the start. Masters of hounds who use them should remember that these foxes require time to fill out and grow, like a large over-grown colt; but if they are hunted the first season after their introduction into a strange country they cannot be expected to show more sport than the ordinary short-brushed little rascal. I very strongly advise all who wish to preserve such foxes to arrange with the M.F.H. to refrain from hunting them until they are fifteen months old, and if this is carried out I can only say, 'Catch them if you can.'

If they are not pressed, these foxes will face the wind for miles, and when they feel they are getting a bit done, which will not be for at least a couple of hours, they will not even then have recourse to any of the mean dodges which ordinary foxes are capable of, such as getting up drains, trees, etc., but they will make for a hill if they can, and do their best to leave their pursuers standing still. I shall not forget a remark made by my old friend Sam Reynell, on having failed to account for one of these foxes (one out of a litter which I got for him in the Highlands). He was a sixteen or seventeen stone man, and he was never very well mounted, for most of his horses were noted for their musical talents, with the exception of some one

or two fairly good ones, and one exceptionally good one named Falcon. He turned to me during a check in the run, and said, 'We don't want these hill-making devils; it's quite enough work to account for our own little short-brushed rogues' (all the same, he was delighted with himself at having shown such sport); and then he remarked to a farmer who was standing watching the 'throw up,' 'How are you, my good fellow? I hope you are well. What a grand fox you have!' etc.; and then, turning again to me, said, 'As if I cared a d—— how he is!' Poor Sam always declared he would die in harness, and so he did.

The following stories regarding the cunning of foxes were told to me by a Highland keeper, one day when we were waiting to get up to some stags and were delayed by reason of the hinds feeding in the way.

Like most men of his class, Donald Mactavish entertained the usual 'suspicions aboot' certain things, such as sounds, lights unaccountably seen at night, will-o'-the-wisps, etc. He firmly believed everything he had ever heard from his parents about such things, and had the very greatest respect for anything ever told him of the cunning of foxes, etc. I tell the story in his own words.

'When I was a laddie of fifteen summers (I was then gillie to his honour Lord F——), one day we were stalking, when foul wind stopped us and gave us a long cold wait, and then some dirty work crawlin' in the moss until our bodies was black as craws: weel, then we had to wait for an hour or so in a foul wind, which perished us until she was near cold as death. The gentleman we was taking up to the beasts, she was a fine shot; when she gave us the

dram, she told us about the fox she saw coming out of the cairn of stones one day on yon hills in Carrou Forest. "When we was lying there," she says, "the fox went down to Loch Ericht, and when she got to the water she hided in the heather a wee little, and soon pushed out something on the water, which we saw with the glass was moss. The wind took it out on the loch and blew it past some ducks on the water." Well, well, Mr. Corballis, believe me, for it's verra difficult to believe,' and then he went on to explain how some wild ducks were exactly in the middle of the lake, and there being no weeds anywhere near the ducks to hide himself in, our cunning friend crawled down wind through the heather to the edge of the water, unseen by the ducks, where he was seen to tear up some heather and moss and push it out on to the water. Having watched it with apparent satisfaction for some ten minutes or so, floating down towards the ducks and past them without arousing their suspicion, he began to get up another and larger bunch of moss, which he allowed to float in the same direction, but this time he swam behind the moss, taking care to show only his eyes and nose above water. Just as the moss was passing through the ducks, to the amazement of the party, who had their glasses fixed on his manœuvres, he made a sudden dive and pulled down a duck and swam back under water to the place where he entered, and carried the duck into the cairn, where his wife and family were no doubt waiting to enjoy the fruits of his labours with him.

Whilst waiting on a similar occasion in another forest, Donald related 'that a fox was observed swimming about in a lake, alternately diving and re-appearing with a bit of moss in its mouth, the latter

alone being above the water, when all of a sudden it dived, leaving the moss floating on the water, after which performance he made off in the opposite direction to that from which the moss was floating to the shore. The curiosity of the party who were watching these manœuvres being aroused, one of the gillies was sent to go and get the moss, but when he did so he was observed to drop it at once. When asked why he did so, he answered that it "was just crawling with fleas."

I must give yet one more anecdote: 'A tame fox in County Cork was noted for its cunning in various ways. The hen-wife, who looked after it, discovered that it was constantly seizing any of the ducks, chickens, or other poultry which came within reach of its chain, and so she was compelled to shorten the chain so as to prevent these depredations. Somehow or other the fox still managed to outwit her, and the chickens continued to disappear as before. So she decided to watch. At last, one day, after having given him some milk and porridge, of which he was especially fond, and which she hoped might perhaps cure him of his thieving propensities, her watching was well repaid, for she saw the fox place some of its porridge within reach of its shortened chain, and then retire to its barrel and imitate her voice calling "Chick, chick," so well, that one unfortunate bird went with a rush into the trap, and before the hen-wife could realize what had happened, it was seized and done for.'

I have no space to relate any more of the hundreds of dodges which foxes are up to, but it is ever a matter for the most intense congratulation when one of these wary old stagers is brought to book by fair hunting.

I have known them, when hard pressed and the scent good, try every unexpected dodge. The greyhound foxes, which I have referred to above, apparently take very little trouble to get away from hounds when the scent is bad, being doubtless well aware that there is no necessity for them to over-bestir themselves, and rightly arguing perhaps that ‘*Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.*’

CHAPTER III.

Old and new fashioned hunters—Fencing power nowadays sacrificed to pace—Overgrown colts put to work too soon—Saving overgrown colts—Three horses owned by author—Big horses more prone to disease than smaller—Short-legged, compact horses—Breeding of author's three horses previously referred to—'Little big' horses—Scarcity of old-fashioned Irish brood-mares—Mistake of using Clydesdale stallion—Progeny by above stallion—Mares 'throwing back' to Clydesdale stallion—Mares 'throwing back' to original sire—Results of breeding for sale only—Exorbitant prices of good hunters at present time—Ignorance of breeders—Worthless horses bred by farmers nowadays—Uselessness of Clydesdale sires—Breeding profitable to farmers—Points necessary to be observed in selecting brood mares—Standard of measurements for horses—Author's colts by Marquis—Balance of shape necessary—Necessity for measuring horses at shows—Breeding from unsound stock—Author's horse by Bashful—Author's horse by Cregan—Author's mare Fidget—Run with Queen's (1858)—Opinion of V.S. as to brood-mares—Ignorance of V.S.'s—Colts by Marquis—Professor Ferguson—Necessity for careful selection of V.S. by breeders—Perfect soundness of brood-mares imperative—Author's predilection for small horses—Mr. Collins—Strains from which brood-mares were formerly selected—Ignorance of tenant-farmers on breeding—Proposed course of lectures on breeding—Cheap horses sold for long prices—Horse by Cregan passed over at Dublin—His measurements—His performance in Kilkenny—Made-up fences—Retrospect (Mr. Bryan)—Lord St. Lawrence—Mr. S. Reynell as an M.F.H.—Mr. Filgate (the Louth M.F.H.)—Young M.F.H.'s—Hunting and riding—Government grant for breeding—Breeding of race-horses—Judge of breeding establishment to be a certificated V.S.

It is very difficult nowadays to find the old-fashioned, long, low, short-legged Irish brood-mares so much

prized formerly. Thus it becomes no easy matter to produce the style of horse which we most value. The idea of the fashionable breeders of the present day appears to be to sacrifice everything to pace, and but little trouble seems to be taken in the mating and selection of mares and stallions, so as to breed out the bad qualities and breed in the good. There is plenty of class—there is, in fact, a deal too much of it; but such horses are very inferior to our old-fashioned, clever, leg-to-spare hunters, which gave one the impression that they could carry a man a lifetime and never put him down. I have had the good-fortune to own many such horses, but nowadays fencing power is made to give way to pace, and the former more important quality—indeed, absolutely necessary in a stiff hunting country—is made subservient to the latter more fashionable and less worthy one.

Colts, too, which often require extra time to mature, are often put to work long before they are fitted for it, the overgrown youngster receiving no more consideration in this respect than the more compact, better-matured horse; and the result is, as can only be expected, the former is never so satisfactory or lasting as he would be if proper time for growth and ‘filling-out’ were allowed him.

Big, overgrown colts should, except for the purpose of being broken and mannered, never be put to work until they are five years old, but should be allowed to run loose and gain all the strength they can. Nor should they be fenced before they attain to that age. Many a rough rider ruins an overgrown colt by working him too soon, that would otherwise have turned out a valuable weight-carrier. Such colts are invariably soft,

and require more time for their hocks to form and develop properly, otherwise they are certain to throw out curbs or spavins, and so a promising young horse, with perhaps all the makings of a valuable hunter, is prematurely ruined, blemished, and often made permanently unsound, and utterly useless for hunting purposes, through the impatience of his owner.

I once possessed three such horses, which showed that if put to work too soon they would infallibly develop curb and spavin, and so I did nothing with them, except to have them 'backed' and 'mouthed,' until they were five years old, when, not having any use for such weight-carriers, I sold the three for 1,000 guineas, undertaking to train them myself; and I succeeded in doing so, on the quiet system, and they turned out so well in the shires, whither they went, that I had several applications subsequently for the same stamp of horse, and I found very great difficulty in matching them. Big horses are much more prone to disease than the smaller, more compact, what are termed 'little-big' horses; hence they require longer time to mature. I may mention that one of the three horses which I have referred to was sold for £750 two years after I parted with him. I am of opinion that when a man can ride under fifteen stone, a compact short-legged hunter is more suitable for him than a big leggy horse, which has quite enough to do to carry himself and his saddle, let alone the extra weight of his rider. There is a vast difference between a 'big' horse and a 'leggy' one. The three horses I speak of were big and strong, not showing too much daylight, and when their points and measurement were taken into consideration, I think they were as

good and good-looking a lot as could be bred. They were out of the real old stamp of mares by Marquis, Birdcatcher, and Star of Erin.

I have constantly worked and hunted many of the smaller, more compact animals as four-year-olds, but then they were of that stamp of Irish perfection known as 'little big' ones. Alas! what has become of these little giants nowadays?

In the last twenty years or so our old-fashioned class of Irish brood-mares have been permitted to supply the demands of the foreigners not only with their produce, but they themselves have been quietly picked up and taken from us; and now we are paying dearly for such, and the folly of our farmers and breeders in parting with them. The proverbial golden goose has gone, but where are the eggs? Farmers still breed, it is true, but what has become of the long, low, well-ribbed, short-legged, roomy mares, which were so frequently to be met with in Ireland long ago? The breeders seem to be possessed by this new-fangled idea of pace, and every other good quality is sacrificed to obtain it. The old stamp of mares was nearly always perfect in shape, and there was little or nothing which it was necessary to correct by crossing; but the present fashion has driven the breeder into the fatal error of putting the mare to a Clydesdale stallion prior to her being subsequently put to a thoroughbred, under the mistaken idea that the mare will throw a big foal afterwards when stunted by the thoroughbred—a fatal delusion, and one which accounts for many what may be termed 'swindles,' a big price being in such instances often paid for a three-year-old showing substance and apparent stamina. But before the said

purchase has turned 'four off' the murder is out, as can at once be seen by a practical breeder; and much to the disgust and surprise of the ignorant purchaser, this lump of bone and sinew develops into a regular carthorse.

I have often known many such swans turn into geese, and even when breeding myself, or taking notes of that being carried on by others, I have known mares 'throw back' to the Clydesdale instead of to the thoroughbred. It therefore behoves every breeder to be as careful as he can be to ascertain the exact history of any good-looking mare which he may be desirous of breeding from, for it very commonly happens that a mare will 'throw back' to the first stallion she was put to, and that her subsequent foals will not evince the slightest likeness either to herself or the sire she may have been served by. Breeders nowadays fail to produce the good serviceable animals which were formerly to be obtained at a fair price. They breed too much for sale, and so long as they find it remunerative they are satisfied. I have remarked this growing tendency for years past, and am not surprised at the results being such as they are. It is now so difficult to obtain a really good hunter that an exorbitant price has to be paid for such an animal, from £400 to £500 being no uncommon price, whereas in former days a man could breed the best fourteen-stone horses and pay himself well if he obtained £150 or £200; and such horses were infinitely better than those which fetch the higher prices at the present time.

I have known but very few breeders who thoroughly understood the points necessary to be corrected in

breeding, and I have often known cases in which, for the sake of some trifling expense or trouble, a mare has been sent to the neighbouring stallion without the slightest regard to his being a suitable mate for her or not. Farmers nowadays seem unable to produce anything better than a light-weight weed, which may be fit only to win at some small hunt-meeting, and very often the produce is of an even more worthless stamp, such as the Clydesdale foal to which I have above referred. Such sires should never have been introduced into the hunter-breeding counties of England and Ireland. They are of no use to anyone, not even to the farmer. In Scotland there is a great demand for them, and there alone can such a class of horse pay to breed.

If the farmers in the grass-countries were to turn their attention to the breeding of hunters, and would take the trouble to acquire the knowledge necessary to carry it out properly, they would find it pay them as well as, and better than, anything else, and they would very soon reap the reward of their trouble by obtaining long prices for good hunters; and those horses which fail to come up to their expectations, as being likely to make first-class hunters or steeplechasers of weight-carrying value, would at all events fetch a fair price elsewhere, or as remounts, etc.

In selecting a brood-mare for hunters the following points should be looked for: Her height should be from 14.3 to 15.3, and she should be about seven-eighths bred, with plenty of bone. Her head should be well put on, and her jowl well formed and roomy; shoulders fine and sloping, not loaded; knees well made; legs short and flat, and the sinews so well and cleanly

developed from knee to pastern that the groove on each side of the tendon should be deep enough to admit of a forefinger being placed in the middle of the flat part of it; pasterns rather short and sloping, not straight; feet good and of equal size, and not flat; thighs big and with plenty of room; girth 8 feet or 9 feet round, the larger the better, provided the mare is well bred; hocks well placed under her, so as to be able to 'change' on any bank; well ribbed-up.

Always allowing that she is sound, a mare so shaped may be considered perfection. Where, however, any of the above-named qualifications are wanting, they may be corrected in the foal by choice being made of a stallion which is perfect in such points.

Out of such mares as here described I have bred not only little horses which have been marvels of strength and activity, but also horses of greater size, which have been fit to carry weight in the shires, and which have won some hunt-cups, and the Grand Military to boot.

From the measurements which I took of two perfectly-shaped hunters of 15.2 and 15.3, I have been able to take the following as standard measurements. They may perhaps serve as a guide to those who may contemplate the purchase or breeding of hunters, etc.

Shoulders, measure taken from the top of the withers to the top of the middle of the chest, 38 to 45 inches. (I may add that the more sloping the measuring-tape has to be placed, the better the shoulder, if not loaded in front.)

When measuring horses of 16 or 17 hands, the above measurement would be increased.

Round girth, 9 feet to 9 feet 8 inches. (Large horses often measure less, but they should measure 9 feet 4 inches to 9 feet 6 inches, and with such formation they will not show too much daylight.)

From hip-bone to outside point of hock, from 40 to 45 inches. (Larger horses should measure from 45 to 50 inches, but I have seen some little 'giants' which measured more than any tall weight-carrier I ever saw.)

N.B.—This last measurement is a very important one.

'Under the knee,' from 8 to $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Width between the jaws at the jowl, from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches. The width of the jowl is also an important matter. If it is too narrow it is apt to be a source of trouble to young horses during strangles, etc., and a horse so formed may choke, or develop wind-sucking, crib-biting, or whistling. The measurement I give affords ample space for breathing and swallowing.

The shape of the forehead is also another point which has to be noted, for when the space between the eyes is too little the horse is generally unreliable or a 'fool.' The eyes should be wide apart, the forehead full and prominent, and the head generally well shaped, but not too small. I have owned some very fiddle-headed horses, which were the best performers I ever saw.

The colts which I had by Marquis had large but sensible heads, with well-formed, roomy jowls; the one which sold for nearly £800 being rejected by many supposed judges, the latter not being able to discriminate between a malformed fiddle-head and such as I have described, which were not only handsome,

but well set on; indeed, better heads could hardly be. I have seen judges at horse-shows display much ignorance, and I have noticed that the awards have been wrongly bestowed on one or two occasions at Dublin, prizes having been given to horses which I well knew to be not only inferior hunters, but unsound, and possessing perhaps but some one or two points worthy of recommendation; and on one occasion the judges passed over one of the most magnificent and most perfectly-shaped fourteen-stone hunters ever seen in Ireland.

It would appear that the knowledge of one or two fashionable points is at times sufficient to qualify a judge for one of the most difficult duties, many hundreds of first-class horses competing for the highest honours.

But very few owners, even those of the largest studs, really understand what is the balance of shape and the points which are necessary to make a horse perfect when properly educated, and many judges are quite mistaken when they trust only to the eye for measurement. Such measurement must be at times but guesswork. A man may be 'out of form' from many causes, or his sight may deceive him, particularly in the later years of his life; and when it becomes a close thing between horses, measurement should be resorted to. An old friend of mine, who had only one eye, often noticed at the first glance many a fault in a horse which had taken me some time to discover. The friend I refer to was Professor Ferguson, H.M. veterinary surgeon in Dublin.

A breeder must remember that, even with the expenditure of both time and money, he has still to

run the risk of failure ; and it is as well to try and avoid this as far as possible, and he should also be aware of the diseases which render the breeding of useful and valuable horses of any class impossible. He should never, therefore, breed from either a sire or dam which is unsound in the wind, subject to megrims or staggers, that has what are termed 'dirty hocks' or navicular disease. For although it is possible, by the careful selection of sire or dam, to improve their progeny, it is impossible to prevent hereditary diseases discovering themselves if either sire or dam are so affected. Broken wind is, perhaps, the worst of all.

As I have observed, I have been the fortunate possessor of several very compact little horses, which were very perfect hunters. Amongst them, one by Bashful was an especially clever horse. He had a habit of 'kicking back' at everything, no matter whether gates, timber, or walls. On one occasion, when stag-hunting, I came to an iron gate, which, having a padlock and chain to it, led me to suppose it was locked. As I had the lead and wished to keep it, I put him at it, and he cleared it ; but in kicking back at it as usual, he kicked it open, it being only shut to, and not locked, as I thought. Mr. Leonard Morrogh thanked me for my courtesy in opening it for him. In those days there were few men who preferred jumping timber or gates to banks, either in Meath, Dublin, or Kildare ; but all the same, I consider that every hunter worthy of the name should be taught so to jump when required.

On another occasion I was riding a horse of much the same stamp, and I put him at a five-foot wall, coped on the top, being ignorant that there was a small river

on the other side. My horse topped the coping and cleared the stream beyond. Mr. Kelly, of Ratoath, one of our best and oldest sportsmen then living, witnessed the performance, and, to use his own words, remarked, 'I could scarcely believe my own eyes!' He knew the wall and what was on the far side of it, and shouted to me to stop, but I did not understand what he said, and luckily got over in a style much more to my own astonishment, I fancy, than that of my horse.

He certainly was about the very best horse I ever owned or ever knew. He was got by a horse named Cregan, which was then standing at Limerick. He was as quick as he was clever, and although I hunted him for many years he only once gave me a fall, and that was not his fault, for he pitched into a rabbit-hole over a big fence. Lady Dysart, whom I had no notion I was piloting, rode over us and sent us both flying.

No horse could possibly have been more perfect. It mattered not what style of country he was in, or whether he went fast or slow at his fences; and he was, too, a most extraordinary performer at a stand.

I one day took a fancy to a chestnut mare which I saw being driven past me as wheeler in a tandem. Her owner, a Mr. Brown, was, I knew, anxious to sell the whole turn-out, he having been ordered to China. I eventually bought the mare, and took her with me to England, and rode her during that summer in the Row. I gave her a few lessons over the bar at the Eyre Arms, and that was the only training she had ever had out of harness. Later on in the year (October,

1858) I rode her one day with the Queen's Staghouuds. The deer was uncartered at Maidenhead Thicket, and gave us a rattling gallop. Although this was the first time the mare had ever been over a country, she never made a mistake. The pace was a hot one, and to save time I rode her over several gates, which she cleared in the most perfect form. At last we came to a gate which was locked, and Mr. Tattersall had dismounted to open it for the well-known lady rider, Miss Gilbert. I requested him to let me 'have it,' which he did, and the result was that I got away and finished the run alone, as the field were pounded. The deer ran into a yard belonging to (I think) a Mr. Mason. As neither Davis nor anyone else was up, I shut the stag, Old Woodman, up in an out-building. Unfortunately, there was a quantity of hay and straw lying about, and so I did not observe that I at the same time shut the door on two or three hounds also. I grieve to say that they killed the poor old stag, which had, I believe, been running for some fifteen years. A full account of this run appeared in the *Morning Post*. This mare, which I had named Fidget, afterwards made a name for herself, both in the hunting-field and over a course. When I rode her in the run I have described she was but a four-year-old. Captain Irwin (late 16th Lancers) bought her, and I believe bred some good foals from her. Strange to say, one of her feet was very curiously turned in, but it did not interfere with her going, and she never made a mistake, though it was, of course, necessary to have her very carefully shod.

If the points upon which I lay stress are attended to in breeding, success must follow. If the breeder is doubtful of his own judgment, I would advise his

procuring the opinion of some competent friend, or that of a well-known veterinary surgeon, and get him to examine any mare he may not feel sure of. I am, however, bound to admit that it is not always an easy matter to find a veterinary surgeon who is possessed of the knowledge requisite in such cases. Veterinary surgeons are by no means infallible, and are at times apt to be totally wrong as regards the formation of brood-mares and colts; and I have known them make the most terrible mistakes at times. I fear that many of them are very much overrated, and are above confessing themselves puzzled or wrong, and often give erroneous opinions to conceal their ignorance, and this I consider to be the reverse of right. Many of the colts got by Marquis had their off-hock larger than the near, and were fired as for spavin. I endeavoured to prove to several veterinary surgeons that these colts were not spavined. Even Professor Ferguson expressed his doubts as to the correctness of my assertion; but I proved it to be so, for the colts which I had by the same horse, and which were similarly formed, were not fired, and as they grew up they developed hocks as perfect and clean and sound as they could be. Professor Ferguson set an example in former days which many veterinary surgeons would do well to follow, for he never hesitated to admit when he was puzzled or in error.

I would therefore advise anyone who may be desirous of breeding horses to be very careful as to what veterinary surgeon he may consult in cases where formation is doubtful. Some people consider that if a mare is sound in wind and sight it is sufficient. There cannot be a more mistaken idea, for no animal should

ever be bred from which is otherwise than perfectly sound in every respect.

I have been often questioned as to my preference for small horses for a bank country, and I have replied, 'A penny is larger than a sovereign,' meaning thereby that I have proved the existence of good qualities far more frequently to be found in small horses than in larger ones.

As I have before remarked, the difficulty is to procure suitable mares nowadays ; and if it is desired to breed a weight-carrier, the mare must be from three-quarters to seven-eighths bred. Such mares will throw the style of foal required, able to carry weight and compact, far more certainly than the best thoroughbred mare ; and this latter is a fact so well known to experienced breeders that it is useless dwelling farther upon the subject here.

If bone and substance are required we must breed from it ; if size, then roomy mares must be employed ; and if quality, we can correct the failing by judicious mating with a thoroughbred horse possessing the perfections which the mare may be deficient in, and *vice versâ*.

Mr. F. G. Collins, formerly of the 16th Lancers, and principal veterinary surgeon, may be reckoned to be our leading veterinary surgeon, and he has evidenced his skill in having performed operations which have evoked the admiration and astonishment of some of the best judges we have on such matters. The following incident may prove interesting. A horse which belonged to a friend of mine was lame, and had been tinkered and doctored by several veterinary surgeons, but all to no purpose. They were evidently

at fault. By accident, my friend, having heard of Mr. Collins' arrival, sent his horse to him for treatment. Mr. Collins happened to be in the yard when the horse was being led in, but was ignorant as to whose horse it was. Glancing at it, he remarked, 'I don't know to whom that horse belongs, but it has not only got navicular very badly in one foot, but the other foot is also affected.' The owner had the horse shot; and the feet, preserved, may be seen at Mr. Collins', diseased just exactly as he described them to be. Nor have I ever known him wrong in his opinion, even in intricate cases in which other veterinary surgeons were opposed to him.

I have had at different periods of my life some exceptionally good mares which never threw a bad foal, no matter what horse they were put to; and in those days to which I refer the breeders had not the same choice of stallions as is now at their service. These mares were selected from Birdcatcher, Navarino, Arthur, Artillery, Bashful, King Dan, Mayboy, Star of Erin, and Marquis strains of blood, and when put to such horses as Artillery, Birdcatcher, etc., they produced horses such as we now but seldom see—long, low animals, which could stay for a week. I have met but very few amongst our own tenants or even other breeders who really understood how to correct faults in breeding. I consider that it is a subject which the judges at our shows would do well to study a little more; and I have no doubt that if they do so their awards will be somewhat less surprising than is often the case, and most certainly more satisfactory.

I do not believe that farmers will ever be successful as breeders, until a course of lectures on the subject is

started by our model breeding establishments. Such lectures might be given every second or third year during the spring and summer, when the farmers would be more at liberty to attend them.

I have from childhood passed my life amongst horses, and have ever taken the very greatest interest in them; and the knowledge which I have thus acquired has enabled me to pick up, for a, comparatively speaking, mere song, many a horse which has turned out to be worth hundreds of pounds.

I have also on several occasions exhibited horses at shows whose shape and performance were perfection, and which also subsequently sold for long prices, but which, nevertheless, were passed over by the judges in favour of some inferior thoroughbred, without a single recommendation save that of breeding.

Now, such judges did a very great deal of harm, for they were apparently ignorant of the points of any but harness horses or racing weeds.

One horse in particular, a horse to which I have before referred, by Cregan, as being about the very best I ever owned, was so passed over at one of the Dublin horse-shows, and the award given to an inferior leggy animal, which was so deficient in the necessary propelling power that he dropped his hind-legs at every fence—a horse for ever coming to grief in the hunting-field, as I well knew. Nor could anything else have been reasonably expected, when the position of his hind-legs was taken into consideration; whereas my own horse was never known to make a mistake, and was as perfect a hunter as a horse could be, and was both clever and fast. I refused 500 guineas for him, which offer was made me by none

other than Mr. Preston, our veteran sportsman. I bought him at first sight for £30. All I knew about him was that he had been running in a cab, and that he was by Cregan. Had I taken him to the shires, he would have fetched nearly double the price. Mr. Preston offered me a sum which I several times refused for him. He once cleared 37 feet over water; and I have already described his jumping the wall with the stream beyond it.

I append his measurements and description, as they may prove a guide. I can only say that if the reader succeeds in securing a similar animal, he will have every reason to congratulate himself.

Faust, iron-gray, by Cregan; 15.3 in height, 7 feet 6 inches round girth; clean and flat legs, hocks tucked under him in a business-like fashion; head beautifully set on; clean, wide jowl; shoulders perfect, fine, and sloped well back; short back, but with long rein; the grandest quarters I ever saw, measuring 50 inches from hip to hock; 9½ inches round under the knee; perfectly formed, sloping pastern; well ribbed up; and up to 14 st. 7 lb. with any hounds in the three kingdoms. I once jumped him over a wall in the Freshford country, in Kilkenny, which had been purposely built up by my friend, Mr. George Bryan, to 7 feet in height with loose stones, and he cleared it, doubtless thinking that it was all solid masonry, whereas it was hollow, and could easily have been knocked down.

In those days all sorts of similar tricks were in vogue, and I am free to admit that harm but rarely ever resulted from them; and we little suspected the existence of such things as built-up fences or a

‘drag,’ and innocently believed we were running the ‘genuine article.’

It is sad to reflect how many of my old friends of that time have, like poor George Bryan, joined the majority—men whose places can hardly be filled nowadays, ever ready and anxious to promote sport to the utmost of their ability, or by help and counsel to a youngster make him worthy of the society of his brother sportsmen. The Kilkennies used to fly in those days, and I have day after day seen their worthy master, Lord St. Lawrence, kiss his mother earth, though he was ever up and at it again. I have known him in every sort of difficulty, from that of hanging on to his horse’s ears to being rolled over, but I never saw him much the worse for his numerous falls, and being, like his late illustrious sire, born to the saddle, like him, seems to possess a charmed life.

In Sam Reynell the qualities which serve to produce the best of masters were present—a man who rode for sport, and not for show. In asserting that he was the very best master I ever knew or knew of, I but express the general opinion of all who were fortunate enough to be acquainted with him. He was wonderfully patient and persevering, and the result was markedly successful, and no master ever more fully gained the respect of his field. He had perfect confidence in his hounds, and very rarely lifted them—I may say never, unless absolutely necessary. Riding to holloa was his abomination; and he had the greatest contempt for the hard-riding element. He was never better pleased than when he had a small and select field—men who loved hunting, but scorned jealousy; and then he was in all his glory. He loved

to point out the perfections of his hounds. 'Leave them alone,' he would say; 'they will pick it up all right, even if the fox has been gone an hour, and we have to stick to it for half as long again.'

I have witnessed some wonderful performances of his at times. Fifty successive years of mastership well gained him the title of the father of our M.F.H. Some of the masters of other packs would have profited not a little had they more frequently attended his meets, and watched the patient, careful manner in which he would hunt up to a fox, even under the most adverse conditions. Indeed, one of our oldest and best sportsmen, the master of the Louth, Mr. Filgate, was one of his pupils, and learned from him the same patience and perseverance, and is equally successful as he was. As regards knowledge of hunting, no master in Ireland can equal him. I know no one who can account for a fox as he can, no matter how trying the circumstances in the way of bad scenting days, or the many drawbacks which now and again arise to interfere with sport. It is far too often the case in these more modern days that young masters have too much of the 'flash-in-the-pan' style about them. If they don't get a 'burst,' as may happen but once in fifty times, it is all up with them, and sport is spoiled through their own over-eagerness and that of the field. They can't control the latter, nor can they control themselves, and thus in their anxiety to get away they lose many a good run. And nothing can be more detrimental to sport, or more despicable in the eyes of all true sportsmen, than a master who rides to sell his horses. A few of the younger portion of the field may perhaps flatter him, but such a style of thing

is not only ruinous to his reputation as a sportsman, but he frequently comes to grief, and gets laid up at the very time when his services are most urgently needed.

Hunting and riding should not clash with, but should accompany, each other, and the master who cares more for the latter than the former is unworthy of his profession, and should betake himself and his talents to some other sphere, such as racing, etc., for he will never succeed in giving satisfaction in the hunting field. No ; give me the man who shows constant sport, and who is able to live with his hounds without jealousy or the desire of obtaining notoriety for himself or his horses.

It is the opinion of many people that since the Government have devoted a sum of money for breeding purposes, the judges should not be selected by vote from the owners of horses, as proposed, but that a paid and regularly certificated judge should be employed, and that the examination for such an important post should be competitive. Such is not a duty which should be lightly undertaken by anyone. What the Government require is a good stamp of horse for remount purposes, out of half-bred mares by a thoroughbred horse, and such produce would at times sell for remunerative prices at three or even four years old.

The candidate who obtained the greatest number of marks in such an examination as I have described might be appointed to the post of judge, or might also combine the united duties of judge and veterinary surgeon, though there are many reasons why the two duties should be kept separate.

I know several men who, owning large studs of racehorses and hunters, have no idea how to breed a weight-carrier. They are, therefore, compelled to trust to the dealers to procure them. The breeding of racehorses is, however, a much more easy task, for no mistake can possibly be made as regards pedigrees ; whereas, with half or three-quarter bred mares and stallions, it is very often a difficult matter to secure what is required.

It is by no means sufficient that a judge for breeding establishments should possess merely an eye for the shape of a horse ; he should in addition be a certificated veterinary surgeon. One may often see men who own well-shaped hunters, and they get the credit of having an eye for a horse. Such by no means is invariably the case, for the man may be fortunate in possessing a stud-groom who is a good judge, or he may perchance breed a well-shaped horse or two. Besides which, the knowledge of points only is useless for breeding purposes where perfect soundness is essential, hence the necessity of the judge possessing the knowledge requisite to detect any unsoundness which may exist, and such is not likely to be found amongst amateurs. The unsoundness may be occult, or it may be that though a horse is actually sound, there are indications of possible or probable unsoundness arising when he is put to work, and this is precisely the one thing which should be most carefully avoided.

CHAPTER IV.

‘The three H’s’—Hints on riding to hounds—Hints on visiting a strange country—Captain Cunningham’s (11th Hussars) horse Stilton.

THREE qualifications are necessary for the man who would aspire to be a good rider to hounds. I will term them ‘the three H’s,’ viz., ‘Head,’ ‘Hands,’ and ‘Heart.’ The first enables a man not only to take care of himself and his horse, but to get the utmost out of the latter without unduly distressing it—to realize the pace at which hounds are running at the time, and to save his horse as far as is compatible with the maintenance of a good position ; and while taking his own time and keeping it, to take advantage of every circumstance which may tend to lessen the labour of the animal. A fox is never accounted for until he is killed, and it is impossible to say how long a run may last or what country may yet have to be crossed before it is over. It is easy enough, perhaps, to get into a field, but it may be an altogether different matter to get out of it, and while a thoughtless, heedless man may bring himself and his horse to grief, or be aimlessly riding about endeavouring to find a negotiable place in a fence, one with his wits about him will, the instant he enters the field, detect the right spot to make for, and be over or through without hesitation or

loss of time. As Whyte-Melville remarks in one of his hunting songs,

‘He has science and nerve, and decision as well ;
He knows what he’s at, and means to be there.’

Nor can hesitation be more fatal than when hounds are running. A man who possesses a head is ever an acquisition in the hunting-field and the master’s best friend, for not only will he himself never prove a sport-spoiler, but by his example he will restrain those who are inclined to press too closely on hounds, or wantonly damage crops, etc. Such a man will not only be quick to ‘get away,’ but having obtained the lead which he is so well fitted to assume, will most assuredly retain it to the end.

Good hands are the exception, not the rule, for they are but rarely met with, and yet they are as necessary as heads. Hands, to be good, must be not only light, but strong. Hence, therefore, over-weak hands can hardly be ‘good.’ Delicacy of touch, and a fair amount of strength also, must combine with each other. I have known men who, with twenty-five years’ experience, have never succeeded in acquiring good hands, and who, in consequence, were constantly coming to grief. No matter how good an eye for a country a man may possess, or how firm a seat or stout a heart, if his hands are bad both he and his horse must suffer ; there is no help for it. Whether through nervousness, ignorance, or from whatsoever cause a man’s hands are heavy on his horse’s mouth, the result is the same. Many a good horse is thrown down from being pulled at and messed about at the very time when it is of the very greatest consequence that he should be allowed to extend himself in order

that he may follow out his own judgment in negotiating a fence, whether the latter be an Irish bank or a Leicestershire 'oxer.' Like a human athlete, a horse measures his powers and stride, and having done so, any undue interference with his mouth must be fatal. I may also add that even if a man has naturally good hands he cannot use them aright unless his seat is also strong and firm on his horse. I am positively certain that nine-tenths of the falls in the hunting-field are caused by bad hands, and oftener than not the wretched horse has to bear the blame. They are the *bête noire* of the hunter.

Heart, or what we Britons commonly term 'pluck,' is, if equally necessary and inseparable, so to speak, from the qualifications which are necessary to enable a man to cross a country successfully, rarely wanting. In this respect we can hold our own against the world. A faint-hearted horseman, a 'funker,' is a curse to himself and to his horse. Nothing is more despicably piteous than the man who fears to go where his horse is able and willing to take him and he himself desires. He cannot possibly derive the smallest pleasure from hunting, and a very few days under such a rider would completely demoralize the most perfect horse. As a rule, however, the other extreme is luckily far more common, though, as I have before remarked, such over-eagerness is to be condemned, for many fences, to be successfully negotiated, must be taken slowly, and a horse must have time to look about him and collect himself. I have already discussed the subject of rushing at fences, and I will not again refer to it further than to offer the advice of an old sportsman to those who may be but entering on their career, and

urge them to remember that whether in the hunting or shooting field 'jealousy' is a most obnoxious vice, and most detrimental to sport. Jealous riders, like jealous shots, are never regarded with any feeling other than that of general disfavour and unpopularity. They spoil their own sport, and, worse still, that of others, and are generally labelled as 'dangerous.'

The following memoranda, which may, I think, prove useful to the uninitiated, can find suitable place in continuation of the few preceding pages. I have headed them as

GENERAL RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN RIDING TO HOUNDS.

1. Sit quietly, and don't jerk your hands or heels unnecessarily. Fix your eye on the spot you have selected in the fence for your line.

2. Do not allow your attention to be distracted at the start. Nowadays success depends very much on getting well away, owing to the enormous crowds. When you have got over the first fence with a good start, and thereby established a lead, you are not likely to be interfered with if you do not pump your horse. When nearing a fence do not rush at it, no matter who may be pressing you from behind, for by collecting your horse you have a better chance of clearing it safely than the man who is rushing at it in your rear, whereas if you rush and he comes to grief on the top of you, the results may be imagined; but if anyone is foolish enough to try and race you at a fence, you can, with your horse well in hand, allow him to pass, and jump behind him at your leisure; and the chances are that you will see the end of the run, when your rushing friend is heels upwards before it is half over.

3. Never ride carelessly at any fence, no matter how small and trifling it may appear to be. I have seen the very worst falls over small fences. The Marquis of Waterford was killed when riding over a low wall which a rat could have jumped, and Mr. Leonard Morrogh, the best horseman we had in Ireland, met his death over a trappy little wattled fence. Loose and careless riding was the cause in both instances; whereas if their horses had been held together and shaken up as they would have been at a more formidable fence, I sincerely believe both would have escaped accident. The one bad fall I ever experienced was caused in the same way. I was riding by the side of Mr. John Preston (the Squire) in the park at Somerville, and to try our horses' pace we raced at a little fence with a drop on the far side of it. My horse rose, but put his toes into it, and turned right over into the fence. I threw myself free, going clean over and falling down the drop on to the top of my head. So much for not adhering to the rules which I had learned as a child, and for the folly of racing when out hunting. For when horses are as intently watching the hounds as you are, or as you ought to be, it is unfair to ask or expect them to think of two things at once at racing pace. If you desire to race your horse, run him between the flags, where he has no hounds to distract his attention. Every hunting man of any experience is fully aware that horses, in many instances, enjoy hunting, and think and calculate more than their riders. Therefore avoid distracting your horse's attention as much as possible, and instil confidence in him and not fear. There are some men who can ride to hounds brilliantly on horses which no one else can do anything

with. Such was the case with my horse Faust. Caffrey, the stud-groom of whom I have before made mention, good horseman though he was, could not get him to go as well as I could. The horse would do anything for me, and when he heard my voice would try and break out of the stable ; and if I went into his box, horse-play was hardly a term strong enough for his mad capers, evidently expressive of his desire for me to take him out ; but as soon as he was out he was sober enough and only eager to get to the kennels. Once with the hounds, he would stick to them all day, and nothing could put him down. If, however, anyone else rode him, he would play all sorts of pranks, and try to get rid of him, and jump short and 'sticky,' and generally disgust his rider, although he was well known to be about the biggest and safest fencer ever seen, and able to jump fences at a stand which other horses could not negotiate at speed.

4. Never give in to any horse, even if by sticking to your point you thereby lose a run. Get him to do what you require, or you will ruin him if he is allowed to have his own way, and will become either a confirmed 'refuser' or a 'jibber'; and above everything, never lose your temper : nothing is more disastrous.

5. When riding at a fence, get opposite to it before you turn your horse to it. If he is turned too sharply round at it, any horse is liable to 'lose' his fore and hind leg on it, and his hind-legs not only become useless, but may be badly sprained, or the horse's back may be wrenched without your being aware of it until he is put at the next fence, when he may be ruined for ever, or even break his back. I have known many a horse killed by being pushed on after a wrench. I once

jumped a horse too slowly at a narrow bank which had become hollowed out by the floods on the far side, and I felt quite plainly that although he had cleared it, he made a second kick in the air, there being nothing to kick back at, and he slightly ricked his back in so doing. I fortunately discovered the injury in time : had I gone on to the next fence, he must have fallen, and would most probably have had to be destroyed ; and as he was a perfect hunter, he would, in again kicking back, have cracked the sinews on his back in the action, and so would have been for ever useless. However, with a fortnight's rest and a liberal use of Farrell's vesicant, he got all right, and carried me for years after without giving me a single fall.

6. Hold your reins firmly with both hands close together, and do not jerk the bit or saw through the horse's mouth with it, unless when he is bolting with you, in which case the latter will answer the purpose of bringing him to reason far sooner and more effectually than the former method. If a horse is a confirmed 'bolter,' he must be bitted accordingly, or else he is almost certain to come to grief by hauling at his mouth : such treatment will not serve to mend matters, but only make them worse. Never try to, as it were, 'scoop' a horse up at his fences ; such 'lifting,' as it is erroneously termed, is often mistakenly supposed to assist a tired horse ; it is, on the contrary, most detrimental to the 'take off' which he has calculated for, and is very likely to bring him to grief. Keep your hands low, almost touching the pommel of the saddle, but nearer than it to your body. A 'boring' horse will doubtless mark the first joints of the third and fourth fingers of the left hand, but such marks are

the signs of good hands, and indicate that the rider has been marked by allowing his horse his head when necessary, and having kept his hands in the right place. I never felt any ill effects from my hands being so marked, but in after-life my fingers became enlarged just where the saddle had rubbed them when riding boring horses, and gave them a gouty appearance, though this is, after all, but a very trivial matter.

7. When riding at a fence, let your toes and your horse's head point in the same direction, viz., straight towards it. Your seat will not only be firmer, but if you do come to grief, your feet are more quickly slipped out of the irons, and are ready for you to alight on; and you will thereby run less risk of being dragged or having your leg broken by getting under the horse. The toes should never be turned out; such a position causes too great stress being placed on the stirrup-leathers. No man, unless he is knock-kneed, and therefore cannot help it, should ever ride with his toes out.

8. I always (unless when hunting hounds) prefer the use of a cutting-whip or an ash-plant to that of a hunting-crop. There are some horses which will not bear even the sight of a lash to a whip, horses which, being naturally nervous, have been made more so by reason of bad treatment. Such horses are often dangerous, and will kick when they are down or in the stable, not from vice, but through their nervousness, and they never forget the whip, which has doubtless been used over them during their training, which was effected rather by brute force than the gentleness and kindness which should have been employed. Now, a stiff cutting-whip, tied on to the wrist, if

properly held, cannot be seen by the horse, and being stiff, cannot accidentally touch him.

In former days the Kilkenny men were noted for their jealous riding, and they used to carry an ash-plant or a cutting-whip stuck into their right boot. They only used the whip when absolutely necessary, and at the end of a good run, when giving a description of the pace, etc., I have heard the question asked, 'Had you to draw?' meaning thereby, was the pace severe enough to require the whip to be drawn from the boot? If there was no 'draw' the pace was voted as having been slow, and the question 'Had you to draw?' became quite a common phrase amongst the Kilkenny men, one of whom, the celebrated 'Maharum Marum,' rode up and down a flight of steps as straight as he would have walked, even when sober. Across country he went as well as any of them in those days except perhaps Lord St. Lawrence, who had more practice in falling than any man I ever met.

9. When riding at a flat fence sit well back, having all the weight placed on the thigh, and not on the stirrups. If your horse makes a blunder, sit steady if possible and leave him alone, as very often by so doing a horse is able to recover himself.

10. At an 'up' fence the rider should throw his weight a little more on the shoulder by bending his knees, and keep his hands very light and the reins grasped in each hand, so as to be ready in case of a scramble over a double. The elbows should be kept close in to the sides, or else a sudden jerk may occur and interfere with the horse's mouth and prevent his taking off, doubling, or landing properly. When the horse is 'changing' on the bank, the weight should be

thrown well back by straightening the knees. I have seen innumerable accidents occur by reason of horses having been improperly ridden at 'doubles'—so rattled at them that they have had to fly them and could only kick back at the bank, instead of being taken slowly and given time to change on it. I have at times seen horses so raced at a double that they could not even kick back at all, and in endeavouring to fly the whole concern come to the most awful grief and sustain either a broken neck or back.

There is nowadays a great increase of what may be termed the 'flying portion' in the hunting field, and there are in consequence an infinitely greater number of bad accidents than there were formerly.

I have invariably noticed that when men who have been used to hunting in one country visit another the chances are that their horses are unsuitable. I have known hundreds of Englishmen who have come over to Ireland for the express purpose of having a 'dart' with the Meath or the Ward, and in hardly one single instance have I ever known a man able to live through a run the first time. Perhaps one of the most notable examples of this was Lord Spencer, who when he was first made Viceroy very often came out with the Ward, and every day came to the most desperate grief. I one day took the liberty of informing him that flying banks on English horses would never do for the country, and the next season, when he had bought Irish horses and adopted a different method of riding at his fences, no one could possibly have gone better than he did, and he finished many a good run alongside of the late Mr. L. Morrough, the well-known master of the Ward. Some people are rash enough to assert that

if a horse can go well in one country he can do so in another, but nothing is a greater fallacy.

Horses which have gone well in some Irish counties may be able to do well even in Leicestershire, and there are also some of our English counties, bank countries, where horses which have been hunted in them can go in Dublin, Louth, Meath, Kildare, etc. ; but it is very rarely the case that I have known English-bred hunters go well in Ireland until they had been properly broken to the country, when they will do well enough. As an example of this I may quote a horse named Stilton, belonging to Captain Cunningham, 11th Hussars. This horse was the biggest and freest jumper I ever saw, but by careful schooling he became a most brilliant fencer even over an Irish county. He was entered to run for the Grand Military at Punchestown, and we had far less trouble to get him fit to run than his owner to ride, and over such a course a man must needs be 'fit' to have a chance of winning. It was a great trial of patience, and was a hopeless task to prevail on the owner to go to bed in decent time and take the necessary care of himself. The result was that when the day arrived he was not able to hold his horse and ride to his orders, which were to lie back about fourth up to a certain point ; but his horse ran clean away with him from start to finish, and instead of winning easily, won by a neck only, while the rider was only just able to stick in his saddle long enough to get into the paddock, where he almost fainted from exhaustion. Nor is this the only case in which I have had the greatest difficulty in getting men fit to ride, whereas with their horses it has been easy enough. We all felt so certain of Stilton

winning if his owner could be got fit to ride him, that we laid freely against every other horse in the 'field,' but very nearly lost our money.

Although it is indisputable that horses can very rarely go in a style of country different to that to which they have been accustomed, they can of course be trained to go in any country, and there are some men who are such superb horsemen, though they are very rarely met with, who can go anywhere on anything. Nerve, temper, and 'an eye for a country,' are doubtless prominent factors, but I take it that hands are the chief secret in the performance, and it is the knowing how to drop the hands when requisite, instead of 'hustling' and 'shaking up' a horse at his fences; and the 'collecting' a horse at the proper time, which enables one man to cross a country successfully, when another with bad hands would most certainly come to grief.

CHAPTER V.

Hunted stag taking up wind—Law given to foxes—Run with the Meath from Ratoath Stick Covert—Bagging foxes at Mallahow—Author's harriers hunting stag or fox—Bloodhound cross—Vagaries of scent—Author's harriers on a fox—Colonel Johnstone—Whyte-Melville—General Fraser, V.C.—Changes for the worse in Irishmen—Sporting farmers—A cow as a hunter—Change in Irish character—Brood-mares of former years a source of profit—Mr. Moran's brood-mare—Mr. L. Morrogh—C. Brindley—Jem Brindley—Retrospect—The late Mr. S. Reynell and Mr. Morrogh—Quick things with the Ward—Accident to horse lent to owner—Advice to young sportsmen—Bad temper in man or horse.

I HAVE before mentioned that by studying the tactics of hunted deer I have been enabled to acquire very much knowledge as regards the science of hunting itself, which I should have failed to gather from the much-to-be-preferred sport of hunting either fox or hare. For example, I have frequently noticed that if a stag or hind were given ten minutes' law, always provided that it was a genuine wild one, or wild-bred one, it went up wind, as is its custom naturally to do. Deer trust to their powers of scent to avoid danger, but when they are close pressed they very frequently change their tactics and reverse the order of things; and foxes and hares will act in a similar manner under similar conditions; but if pressed, invariably have recourse to some new manœuvre, particularly when

pressed in view at first starting. I have, when deer-stalking in the Highlands, known deer go down wind if they suspected danger in front of them, and I have seen them do so and hide in the most unlikely places to which they might be expected to take. If these are the tactics of a deer which is unpressed by dogs, it is hardly a matter for surprise that a fox pressed from the very start should adopt the same. How frequently do foxes seem to disappear altogether after a burst of a few minutes, even with a burning scent ! Very probably such foxes are often accounted for after all ; but I base my conclusion on my own experiences, and I have frequently, when waiting for hounds to come to me, met the fox under the very conditions which I have described. Hence my conviction, which I have still further proved to be a right one with my own pack of 'dwindle foxhounds,' that on a good scenting day, if it is desired to drive a fox up wind, he must not be unduly pressed at starting.

Many a time, as many of my readers must be aware, it happens in good scenting grass countries that a fox, having been found, will afford a short burst, and it maybe is killed, or, sad to relate, perhaps 'chopped,' and then the pack is laid on to the line of another fox which was 'viewed away' at the same time as the first, but going in another direction, a quarter of an hour previously, and a rattling gallop is obtained, especially if the day be a good scenting one. I have the vivid recollection of one special instance of this kind which occurred some twenty-five years ago. My experience had led me to infer, from the circumstances of a run from my own covert of Ratoath, in County Meath, that foxes, like deer, can, on really good scenting days,

be pushed too soon. In cold-scenting countries, or on bad scenting days, I do not think that it is requisite to give the same amount of 'law.' On the occasion in question the day was everything which could be wished for, and there was a burning scent; everything was as it should be, even to the proverbial 'southerly wind and cloudy sky,' when our master (my friend the late Mr. S. Reynell) made his appearance at Ratoath to draw a two-rood stick covert which had been made to hold foxes while a gorse covert was being prepared for the purpose. We had imported some greyhound foxes from Strath Therrick, near to the celebrated Fall of Foyers, in the highlands of Inverness-shire. The previous year these foxes were, at my request, allowed a 'jubilee,' the consequence being that when the hounds were thrown into covert that day there were too many foxes afoot, no fewer than nine being seen, and two were 'chopped.' The hounds were then clapped on to a third one, which got so pressed that after a short ring of about a quarter of an hour it returned to the covert, and the earth being opened, it was very wisely let in, as too much blood had already been shed in that little stick covert. Having thus arranged for the safety of the home-bred fox, a shepherd whom I could trust told me that an old Scotch fox, which we knew well, and which he described as being of an enormous size and with a white tag to his brush, had slipped away before the first two; and so I informed our master of the fact and begged him to lay the hounds on his line, although he had been gone some eighteen minutes previously. Of all the runs I ever enjoyed in the whole course of my life I think that fox afforded me the best, and I

shall never forget the style in which the Meath pack worked up to him over a stiff line of country for three miles till we reached Kilbrew stick covert, when, just as we neared it, we 'tallied' our monster fox jumping the nine-foot demesne wall of Kilbrew. When he reached the top the hounds were within thirty yards of him, and it seemed as if he were doomed to death like his confrères, but although he floundered about and all but fell back amongst the hounds, he managed to recover himself; and as the hounds had to be taken round to a gate, he got a fair start of us, and led us a 'clinker' towards Garristown, and then on to a place called Mallahow, near Westown, a ten-mile point from Kilbrew, which, with the three miles worked up wind to him, made up one of the best runs on record, there not having been the slightest check after we started in earnest from outside the Kilbrew demesne wall until the hounds suddenly threw up at Mallahow after going for fifty minutes. At this point it was evident that something was wrong, as the hounds literally raced to the middle of a field and then threw up their heads and gave up; nor could the line be recovered by casting. The field arrived about ten minutes after, and I heard our master's welcome voice shouting out to me, 'Have you accounted for him, Corballis? What a clipper!' etc. 'No,' I replied; 'I'm sorry to say I have not. I'm afraid there has been foul play somewhere, and that the fox has been unfairly killed. There are a lot of men over there at work at a drain, and they have got a greyhound with them, and it's my belief they have got the fox; I can't make anything else out of it.' The very suggestion of such a possibility threw our worthy master into a towering

passion, and he wasted fully ten minutes in casting about. Meanwhile, I went up to the men to make a few inquiries of them, and after much persuasion I proved that I was correct in my surmise, and that they had taken the fox with the greyhound. Eventually, they returned it to me in a bag, luckily unhurt by the greyhound. It had, however, broken a toe, which I fancy occurred when jumping the demesne wall at Kilbrew. Our master insisted on my giving it to blood the hounds if it was damaged, but I begged for it to be put back again into my covert, and we did so. It appeared to be all right then, but what became of it I don't know, as we never saw it again.

It used to be a very common trick in those days, in the part of the country into which we ran, to take foxes alive when the chance occurred, as the master of the Finglass Harriers gave a sovereign for every live fox brought to him, there being no foxhounds in that district, and hints to this effect were doubtless given when the harriers were about Mallahow. However, that is all changed for the better now, and foxes often cross over to Westown, a covert in the Louth country. The staghounds also very frequently cross this country, but do no harm whatever to the fox-hunting, for I have more than once seen a fox looking back at the hounds going in a contrary direction, after having been disturbed out of a furze-ditch or gorse-covert and then return to lie down again, the staghounds never leaving the stronger scent of the deer for the fox.

I have, when I kept harriers, experienced some difficulty in getting them to hunt deer, but they preferred foxes to hares, the reverse being the case with staghounds; but eventually I succeeded in getting

them to hunt all three, and it was marvellous how they would hold on to the scent on which they were first laid. It was a source of amusement to one or two old masters of hounds who were present to hear me calling out, 'Ware hare!' to harriers when we happened to be running a deer if a hare got up; but, nevertheless, they seemed to perfectly understand what was expected of them, whether hunting fox or deer, and we generally managed to account for the deer, and, I may add, for nearly every fox which we hunted. These harriers were 18 inches, and were really more of the dwindle foxhound than harriers. I found that a touch of foxhound and bloodhound cross was invaluable for road-hunting and for a bad-scenting country. I had amongst them a few couple of Mr. Kavanagh's celebrated pack of dwindle foxhounds, which I got when they were sold at Sewell's. It is my firm belief that this invaluable bloodhound cross is not recognised half as much as it ought to be, whether for hunting, shooting, or tracking deer. I have often seen deer tracked by a collie, even the second day after being wounded; and I feel certain that if the collie and bloodhound were crossed the result would produce a 'tracker' even more useful. Pointers crossed with the bloodhound possess extraordinarily fine noses. I have often thought that masters of foxhounds do not sufficiently respect the bloodhound strain or use it sufficiently; and I am sure that if they used it more, where countries are cold-scenting, clayey, or sandy, a greater number of foxes would be accounted for. I have myself written on the subject, but in vain, as I find people are satisfied to adhere to a fashionable breed all their lives, and will

not take the trouble, as I have done myself, to go out of their way to try and find out how best to solve some of the many difficult problems which present themselves in sport.

One thing, however, I may assert, and without fear of contradiction, which is that scent is such a complicated enigma that it requires to be combated by extreme measures ; and this I have many a time proved to be the case. No matter how cold the soil, or how holding some good grass-land may be, there are days on which it is impossible to do anything. Men at once exclaim, 'It's quite useless ; hounds can't pick it up!' etc. But on such days, when I have heard of other packs failing to do anything, I have known these dwindle foxhounds of mine race to the finish. On one occasion—and there are still several persons living who will remember it, amongst them Mr. Wilfrid Blunt (of Arabi Pasha renown), whom I had mounted on that his *début* in the hunting-field—we were hunting a hare, a pottering brute, round and about the well-known Fairy-house course. When close to the house we put up a fox out of some gorse in a ditch in which the hare had squatted. There was no time to think of the latter, and as I had a few select strangers staying with me, and the scent seemed so bad for hare hunting, I laid the pack on the fox, which I had seen sink the wind down the bottom of a ditch. The field were none the wiser, but thought we were still on the hare. That fox took us as straight as the crow flies for Dunboyne, and then on to Roosk fox covert, where the earth-warner happened to be, and he, thinking it was the Meath Hounds which he heard racing towards him, stopped the earth ; and if it had not been that my

old friend, Colonel Johnstone, then living at Ratoath, raced in at the finish and whipped off the hounds, that old dog-fox would have been killed. Colonel Johnstone was the only one who was up at the finish in time to save me from a row with the master of the Meath. I saw very little of the run, as I was riding a hack, which was an indifferent jumper, and had no intention of doing more than circuit about after a hare, and did not want to get on my second horse, but laid the hounds on at once, and so consequently was out of it before it began in earnest; but it was as good a fifty minutes, so Colonel Johnstone informed me (and there are still few who can compete with him), as he had ever seen—and, indeed, we had nothing better with the Meath that season. It was a great sell to me to have lost it, but I had several friends to mount that day, and having six days a week to do, as luck would have it, I was short of horses that day.

Apropos of mounting one's friends, it often fell to my lot to mount the late Major Whyte-Melville, and no straighter, better man, even on a strange horse, ever went better in a strange country. At times General (Charlie) Fraser, V.C., acted the part of Good Samaritan in a princely fashion, and on one memorable occasion two gray horses of his, one ridden by himself and the other by Whyte-Melville, were inseparable throughout the run.

It is sad to reflect what a change for the worse has come over the whole country since those days. It was then the pride of Paddy to have a fox 'awaiting yer 'oner,' no matter what havoc might have been played in the poultry-yard. 'Sure, we will be well paid by their 'oners when the time comes; but the rale

“blaygard” is just waiting you, and the covert is as quiet as the churchyard there, yer ’oner,’ etc. All is now changed : Paddy himself is a different being in every way ; the sport-loving propensity is still as strongly developed in him as ever it was, but he wears an unhappy, sullen expression, which says, ‘I only wish I could see the ould times again, and have all the fun of them, too.’ Alas ! what false friends the Irish agitators have been to the country, solely for their own benefit. They have sadly imposed on the too credulous Irishman, and robbed him of his birth-right, rents, fun, and sport, the sources of riches and delight to him.

In former days the turn-out of some of the farmers was a caution. ‘By yerr lave,’ and away past your horse’s quarters flew Pat on a raw three-year-old, which represented, barring the pig, his entire stock-in-trade. These youngsters had often been backed but a few days previously, and were not infrequently ridden without a saddle, and the whole ‘get up’ was rusticity itself. One day, during a run with the Louth Hounds, a man mounted on the back of a cow suddenly made his appearance. He rode over a couple of fences alongside of me, holding on to a straw rope twisted round the animal’s mouth, and the two as suddenly disappeared into a yard. The man was no doubt a first-class rider, and was in the habit of thus amusing himself by training the cow to jump these two fences on her way from one farm to the other, on the chance of some day being able to show off if the hounds ran through his place, and, as luck would have it, happened to be out just when hounds were running hard. It was no joke having such an apparition come suddenly

alongside of one and as suddenly disappear, and I shall never forget it. Such a thing could not occur nowadays, for all the fun has been knocked out of the Irish character, and suspicion, even of his best friends, now marks the Irishman. So much for the degrading influence of the 'almighty dollar' and the wily sharpers who have for years past been feathering their nests with other people's money, and who have brought about the degradation and ruin which at present exists amongst all classes of Irishmen, the highest as well as the lowest. Not only is the national sport of hunting itself seriously interfered with, but the farmers in consequence have lost the market for their hay and oats, which represents the loss of enormous profit to them; and the man who in those days possessed a good brood-mare of the right sort was able to make a real good thing out of her produce, especially with such sires as Navarino and Birdcatcher, etc., to put her to. I have often in former years seen such mares with colts at their heels which could be purchased for a very small sum—a mere song; and worth any amount of money nowadays. Alas! the mares have now been nearly all parted with, and they are indeed but very rarely to be met with at the present time.

My reference again to the subject of brood-mares recalls to my memory the performance of one which belonged to a friend of mine, Mr. Joseph Moran, of Raistown, County Meath. He had bought her at a fair for £15, and she produced many first-class colts, all of them up to weight, being compact, short, flat-legged horses, which were worth going a long way to see. A Navarino mare every inch of her, and my

friend sold her colts for such good prices as £200 apiece as four-year-olds ; some of them went to dealers for even 400 and 500 guineas, proving that they were really first-class hunting stock. The paddock where the mare was kept, with her foal at foot, was surrounded by a hedge too high for any horse to jump over, and the gate leading out of it was an iron five-barred one of over 5 feet 10 inches in height ; yet, nevertheless, Mr. Moran constantly found this mare alone by herself in another field, and he could not understand how she managed to get there. Time after time he had to lock the gate and put her back again into her paddock. He began to suspect that someone must have a key which fitted the lock of the gate, and allowed her into the field, which was cropped with oats, so he determined to sit up all night and watch, and the very first time he was rewarded for so doing, for just at daybreak he was amazed to see the mare walk up to the iron gate some two or three times as if she were measuring its height, and then quietly trot up to it and clear it ; as he described it, ‘ You could see the moat of Ratoath under her when she was in the air.’ He thus satisfied himself not only that no foul play had been practised, but that he was the owner of a horse not to be got nowadays for love or money. As I have before stated, Irish horses are for the most part natural jumpers, and when well-shaped, as this mare was, can jump anything, and even have a leg to spare over any fence, if not misused and knocked about. Alas, poor Leonard Morrogh ! you and I had some wonderful standing jumpers between us, and many is the useful hint I gained from watching your marvellous seat and perfect hands. As long as I live I

shall remember our happy days with the 'ould Wards.' They were days!

Poor Charlie Brindley, few ever came up to him, and none ever more worthily carried a horn, and those who know best have often said the same. As a huntsman, whether with fox or staghounds, he was unequalled. Should any of my old friends peruse these lines, may I ask them, can they ever forget that 'Old 'ard, gentlemen,' 'Oh! be Gob, sir, you are not fit to be hout with 'ounds; between the flags is the place for you!' etc.? On one occasion, during a 'quick thing,' a loose horse got between us at a fence just too late to pull up if he swerved. I yelled to Charlie 'Look out!' and we all three took it in our stride, the loose horse being none other than the celebrated Grey Friar, belonging to a Mr. McCan. 'What on earth has happened to Mr. McCan? however could he fall with such a horse?' I remarked to Charlie. 'Oh, sir,' he replied, 'you see, first of hall 'e lost 'is 'at, then 'e lost 'is 'ed, and then, be Gob, sir, 'e lost 'orse and hall.' No matter what he was on, Charlie was always in his place, and but seldom came to grief, although during the commencement of his career he was by no means well mounted. He never over-rode his horse, but, like a cautious deer-stalker, kept slowly and quietly creeping up to his hounds, passing by the 'flash-in-the-pan' division with a quiet expression of commiseration; but if he saw a 'good man' come to grief his own grief was very real as he passed on his way to be up at a check, as he invariably was. We have often run for twenty-five Irish miles with the Ward, and, as every experienced person is aware, it takes a deal of discretion on the part of the rider to see the end of such runs, but

he was always there or thereabouts to save the deer or take his hounds home. His memory is still held in veneration amongst the Irish hunting men of all classes who knew him, and ever will be, so long as they live

The loss of two such men as Leonard Morrogh, the master, and Brindley, his servant, is not only a loss to us who knew them so well and who hunted with them so constantly, but is a calamity to Ireland generally. The present huntsman to the Ward, Jem Brindley, Charlie's son, is following in his father's footsteps, and bids fair to be equally successful and popular. For myself, alas ! I am no longer as light as I used to be, but I long to be with them again as of yore, and I can hardly express how great the longing is at times, never more so than when, as now, I am again crossing the old country, though, alas ! but on paper. I often dream of former days with Sam Reynell and the Meath, and of a certain gray horse which carried me for years without a fall. The fatal accident which befell Leonard Morrogh has recalled a host of memories. Many were the Board of Works drains which he alone of all the field was able to negotiate. How many of those who tried to follow were interred therein ! Do what we would, even if mounted on the best of horses, if we ever did succeed in getting on terms with him it was useless trying to shake him off. Nothing but the experience gained by riding carried the day in those big runs. No jealous man could ever have lived to the end, but would have been done for, with hounds racing for fifty minutes or more without a check, with their heads up on a breast-high scent ; and such runs were so frequent in those days that it was dangerous work attempting to ride unless you knew

what your horse could or could not do. Throughout a long experience I can say I never killed a horse, and but on two occasions only really hurt one, and those were due to want of condition in recent purchases. Once only was I unfortunate enough to seriously damage a horse, and it was unfortunate, for it was lent me. The horse was not up to my weight, and I was riding through a gap in order to avoid an ugly fence, and a piece of a glass bottle cut right through the back sinew. Fortunately it was a mare, and she was, therefore, useful for breeding purposes, but she was never able to do another day's work. I would again urge on the younger portion of my readers the great necessity there is for them to avoid anything in the shape of jealousy in the hunting-field, as also to save their horses and use their judgment as much as they possibly can, and to remember that a horse well nursed at the beginning of a run will ever have a leg to spare at the end of it, when those of the 'flash-in-the-pan' division are either on their backs or are falling at every fence. Practical experience is also necessary to bring a horse into the condition to stay through a run of twenty or thirty Irish miles with but two or three momentary checks ; yet our horses were not infrequently so put to the test, and experience taught us how to nurse them through such a severe trial.

If bone and breeding are the first qualifications for a hunter, temper is undoubtedly as important. A bad-tempered horse is as undesirable as a bad-tempered rider, and it is very long odds against either getting to the end of a 'real good thing.' Of the two evils, bad temper in a rider is, I think, the greater, and more likely to bring both horse and man to grief. Many a

good-tempered man has got a bad-tempered horse to the end of a run, but if the case had been reversed, both must have come to grief. On the contrary, I have seen many a good-tempered horse brought to grief by bad-tempered men. But as I have elsewhere made reference to this subject, I do not desire to inflict on my readers a repetition, and I only again make mention of it to impress on the younger portion of them the necessity for the avoidance of the evils against which to be 'forewarned' is surely to be 'forearmed.'

These extracts taken from my hunting-journal may prove of interest to many of my friends of former days, and perhaps to others also. They are the records of days which I much fear can never be again renewed, unless a very great change comes over my native land. Oh, that the people would but listen to the advice of their best and truest friends! What have they not thrown away to those evil-minded dogs Deceit and Treachery! We can but adopt as our motto 'Dum spiro spero,' and hope that when they have again returned to common-sense and consequent propriety, we whom they have expatriated may return to end our days in happiness again amongst them.

CHAPTER VI.

Hunters—Author's horse Leviathan—Quality—Carriage of hunter—Points—Boring horses—Ewe-neck—Forehand—Barrel—Width of chest—Forearm—Fore-leg—Pastern—Foot—Compactness of body—Loin—Temper—Rest required after a hard day—Stimulants for an exhausted horse—The Meath 'Ratoath' harriers—Bloodhound Rubens—Value of the bloodhound cross—Musical hounds and cold-scenting countries—Error of breeding hounds for pace—Nose *v.* pace—Eight and fifteen years after a stag—Over-anxiety of young masters of hounds—Cold scent.

PUTTING racehorses aside, hunters are the most valuable of all horses. In my opinion, a hunter should not be under fifteen or over sixteen hands, though I once possessed a horse which I called Leviathan—and a very well-known horse he was, too, with the Meath, Ward, and Kildare hounds—which was over seventeen hands, and yet was as light a fencer as any pony could have been, and a most perfect hunter, and he never once put me down. I sold him to my brother, who rode fifteen stone seven, and he carried him equally well and safely for years. So that there is, in the height of a horse, as in other things, no rule without its exception. The horse I speak of was up to seventeen stone, and very nearly clean bred. I maintain that a hunter should be at least three-quarters bred, and, indeed, I may say I prefer their being seven-eighths for any country, whether bank or flying. The

chief object is to produce horses for hunters nearly clean bred, but with the shape, substance, and action of the half-bred ; and, as I have before observed, their hind-legs must be well placed under them, so as to enable them to go in a country in which the banks are narrow and rotten ; and they must be well ribbed up, to allow of the hind-legs being tucked under them.

A hunter should carry himself higher than a race-horse, even though the latter be going at three-quarter speed only. If it were not for his galloping too low, a thoroughbred would, of course, make the best hunter of all ; but owing to his style of galloping he is very apt to rush through and into his fences rather than over them, and very few thoroughbreds carry themselves high enough to see what sort of fence is before them, or how to negotiate it. When men do ride thoroughbreds out hunting, the getting them safely and satisfactorily over a country depends more on the man than the horse. Therefore those men who prefer thoroughbreds as hunters handicap themselves very heavily, especially if in a stiff, close country, inasmuch as the riding of such horses demands extra care and judgment.

The points to be observed as of importance in a hunter vary somewhat from those usually found in a thoroughbred. To particularize them I may remark that amongst those of principal importance a good mouth is a necessity ; for a hunter must be light in hand, and in order to secure this his head must be well put on, his neck thin, especially so beneath, crest firm and arched, and wide between the jaws. His head will thus be well set on, and form with the neck the

angle necessary to afford ready sympathy between the mouth and a light-handed rider ; and man and horse thus working in unison will be better able to overcome the difficulties presented by formidable fences. Nothing can be more tiring or trying to one's temper than a heavy-headed boring horse dwelling on one's hand throughout the day, and such animals, if constantly ridden, would spoil a man's hands and make them heavy in course of time.

We have all of us, I suppose, at one time or another, owned ewe-necked horses. Such conformation makes them appear short in the forehead. For racing, or, as far as appearance is concerned, for breeding purposes, this peculiarity is a drawback ; but I have found by experience that a horse so shaped in the neck can, by reason of the windpipe being in almost a straight line from the lungs, breathe more freely and naturally. It is doubtless the case that horses so shaped, unless carefully handled when being broken, are apt to be rather heavier on the hands, but I consider that this is more than fully compensated for by reason of the staying power being so materially increased, for the reasons I have given.

The forehead of a hunter should be loftier than that of a thoroughbred. The latter, used for racing purposes, can afford, without detriment, to have his hind-quarters an inch or two higher than his forehead, inasmuch as propelling power is of the chief importance to a racehorse, and, the forehead being somewhat low, the weight is thereby thrown more in front, and the whole machine is more easily and speedily moved. In a hunter we must, for the sake of comfort, have a lofty forehead and extensive shoulder, the latter oblique,

but thicker than in the racehorse. The saddle will thereby also remain steadier.

The barrel of a hunter must be rounder than that of the thoroughbred, so as to allow more room for the play of heart and lungs, and furnish an increased supply of air to the latter, which is very essential when a horse has to keep going for several miles without a check. Width of chest is also desirable. It must be borne in mind that the continued exertion of fox-hunting quickens the respiration at times to a dangerous extent, and particularly is this the case if a horse is not in perfect condition. A very increased flow of blood is hurried through the lungs from the heart under such circumstances, compared to that which passes when the horse is at rest. If, therefore, the space for the play of heart and lungs is insufficient, the horse must come to grief, and not infrequently drops down dead during a long run. I have in a previous chapter mentioned the case of no less than seven horses being killed during a run with staghounds, and all these were narrow-chested animals.

The forearm of a hunter must be more muscular than that of a thoroughbred racehorse, inasmuch as not only strength, but endurance also is needed. The leg must be broader when viewed sideways, and especially below the knee; just in proportion to the distance of the tendon from the 'cannon,' or shank bone, will be the increase of mechanical power. A racehorse may be tied with a piece of silk below the knee without in any way suffering impediment, whereas a hunter so treated would very rarely be able to go far and soundly. A hunter should be shorter in the leg and his action higher than that of a racehorse. This

higher action enables him to clear his fences safely, and also to double his legs under him when 'taking off.'

The pastern of the hunter must be shorter and less slanting, though, of course, oblique enough. The use of long pasterns in the thoroughbred is to diminish the concussion which must result from his immense stride and speed, and for this purpose it is most beautifully adapted, but strength must be sacrificed by such formation to elasticity. The stride of the hunter being less, he does not require the same length of pastern, but the greater strength to support his own heavier body and that of his rider, as well as for the purpose of sustaining a greater amount of fatigue; a certain degree of obliquity is, however, necessary, or else the concussion which must result from galloping and jumping would soon tend to lame him.

The foot of a hunter must necessarily be perfect, for he has to gallop over all sorts of ground, hard and soft alike, and this, if his feet are faulty, must very soon lame him. Racehorses suffer very much from contracted feet—indeed, they are their curse, though horses whose feet are so constructed are able to race for a time. The position of the feet is also important: they should be perfectly straight to the front. If they turn out a little it is perhaps not so serious an objection as if they turn in, for in the latter case they are dangerous to ride when fatigued by a long run or journey, and under such circumstances they are apt to be careless and come down; although my mare Fidget, which was so extraordinarily good a hunter, was very peculiar in this respect, but that was the one exception I have known.

The body of a hunter requires to be more compact

and shorter than that of the racehorse, in order that he may not extend himself too much in his gallop. Nothing would tire a horse more in a run than overstriding himself. The compact, small horse appears to skim the surface of the ground when compared with the longer-striding horse, whose feet sink deeper into the ground, and thereby necessitate greater exertion to free them at every stride.

Every horseman is aware how much more enduring a short-bodied horse is in climbing a hilly country, though perhaps not equally good in descending it. Herein lies the secret of suiting racehorses to certain courses, and this explains why it is that a horse which can do well on one course cannot on another. A big-striding horse may do on a straight and even course, but on one which is uneven and with sharp turns in it the smaller and handier animal is his superior.

The loin of a hunter should be broad, the quarters lengthy, and the thighs full of muscle.

Then, again, as regards temper, to which I have before briefly referred, there is no greater abomination than a bad-tempered, cowardly horse. It was such an animal which, after nearly killing two jockeys and a friend of my own, all but killed me, and for two years I was next door to eternity.

After a hard day a horse requires at least three days' rest; and if he is under six years old, four days at the very least should be allowed him. Taken as an average, three days' hunting a fortnight is quite as much as a sound horse can manage; but it is advisable to give a horse a light sweat the day before hunting.

Some young horses require more time than others, according as to how they have been fed as two-year-

olds, that being the age at which it is most important that they should be well fed, in order to assist their growth and the due development of their muscles.

I have already quoted a run with staghounds in Ireland of thirty-five Irish miles, and in which no less than seven horses died, although my horse, Faust, carried me to the end of it, and enabled me, with the assistance of Mr. Kennedy, of Fleemstown, to save the deer at Gormanstown Castle. He was fresh and fit again four days after.

I have sometimes pumped horses out when young and not in proper condition, but that was by reason of their having been underfed at two years old. I having bought them as three-year-olds; but I think the farmers in Ireland act more wisely in this respect nowadays, and they take more care of their young horses, for good ones have become so scarce that high prices are now given for them.

The best remedy I know for a horse which is completely pumped out in a run is whisky, beer, porter, or even sherry—indeed, any similar stimulant—poured down its throat by means of a soda-water or small beer bottle. If the horse is very bad, half beer and half whisky is the best; but even a milder remedy will afford immediate relief if the animal is not in danger.

One very hot day in August, in Scotland, I had just missed a train at the station. I at the time possessed a very fast well-known trotter named Belmont. As I was very anxious to catch the train if possible, having an engagement to shoot in Norfolk, I drove on to Inverness, which was nine miles distant, and caught the train there, having accomplished the distance in twenty-five minutes. The horse must have died if

my man had not given him the remedy I have described above, for he was in very high condition and the heat was intense. But such a remedy, if given a few hours later, would have been fatal, for it must be used only when the animal is hot. If there is time to prepare it, a cordial or ginger ball, mixed with hot ale, is also a good remedy.

At the period of my life to which I have referred in the foregoing pages, I kept a pack of harriers, of which I have already made some mention. My object in keeping them was partly for the purpose of training my horses, as also for the amusement of some of my many soldier friends quartered in Dublin, who were not always able to get away from their duties early enough to attend the meets of the other packs, such as the Meath, Kildare, etc., and we had some very nice hunting runs. I had been at considerable pains to get together a nice level pack, crossed according to my own ideas with the blood which I considered most useful for a dry country. At first they were a bit uneven, but all the same were wonderfully good performers, and by dint of judicious crossing I obtained some exceptionally good hounds, amounting in numbers to an average pack of some thirteen couples, out three days a week.

The best bloodhound blood in Ireland was at my service from the kennels of my friend Mr. Roden, who kept a pack of such hounds; but a son of the well-known bloodhound Rubens belonged to an English friend who came over to Ireland for a time, prior to his taking this best of all bloodhounds to America, where he produced many useful crosses. A slight infusion of this blood is worth any amount of any other in a dry or bad-scenting country.

No climatic influence seems to affect the bloodhound, especially when on a wounded deer or a hard-hunted fox, for these hounds can work on a scent which has been stale for many hours, and far better even than the cross between the Scotch deerhound and the colley, which latter can pick up the track of a deer after the scent is a day old ; and I pin my faith, therefore, on the bloodhound cross as being the most useful where scent is bad or stale. Judges at shows are far too fond of what may be termed 'fashionable' points. Such may look all very well in a picture, and are, perhaps, very admirable in theory, but for my own part I prefer hounds which possess the best nose, and which are produced by crossing with those strains which are the best suited to overcome the difficulties, which other strains are incapable of doing. At the same time, although I recommend the acquisition of 'nose power,' I should advise breeders to reduce the strain to a third cross, or even less, according to the nature of the country they wish to hunt, whether cold-scenting or not. In cold-scenting countries scent seldom lies long enough for over-bred and mute-running hounds to acknowledge. The more music the better ; otherwise, in such countries, but little sport can be expected and few foxes brought to hand. We killed more foxes in Meath in the old days with a somewhat slow and musical pack than I have ever seen worked up to by any other pack since then. Many a fox escapes a flash, flying, mute pack, which our old-fashioned hounds, which were left alone, would account for. If I ever accuse a brother master of hounds of breeding too exclusively for pace, the reply I get is either 'We must get away from the riding demons,' or 'It's

such a bad-scenting country that we must keep close to a fox ;' yet I would remind them that if such is necessary with them under ordinary circumstances, it must be fatal in woodland hunting where there is much covert, inasmuch as mute hounds must often slip away from the field. Any old huntsman is well aware that the faster the hound the less musical he must necessarily be, for no hound can travel fast and be musical. I have known more hounds spoiled through this mistake than even through lack of breeding ; and of the two evils I should most certainly prefer the music, no matter how slow the pace, as failing his 'going to ground' the fox must eventually come to hand with plenty of 'nose power' in the pack behind him. I have often witnessed the Highland fox-hunter, on foot, account for a fox with the most nondescript animals in the way of hounds which could be imagined. It is marvellous how these mongrels can creep up to their fox, and run up to him too, over rough, hilly ground. There is nothing which a fox so much dreads as 'nose power,' he values it so highly himself ; but when he finds the hounds racing him he practises the same tactics as the hare he himself hunts, and by running on his own 'foil' will often succeed in dodging a flash pack, whereas with a pack which is of the 'nose to ground' sort, which leave no chance untried, each hound helping the other to unravel the line, the case is different. Such hounds as the latter seldom require lifting, and I maintain that one lift to a 'holloa' is worse than twenty disappointing finishes without blood. Like many other sports, patience is the key to success in hunting. I was once for eight consecutive years stalking one particular stag, but I got him

at last. Had I secured him 'the first time of asking' there would have been nothing in the performance. A friend of mine, since dead, similarly stalked a stag for fifteen seasons, and got him in the end. This is surely patience with a vengeance! If a little more matter-of-fact patience were used by masters of hounds they would kill more foxes.

It is over-anxiety in hunting and shooting alike which is the cause of spoiling many a day which would have otherwise been successful. The over-anxious master makes his field as anxious as himself, and thus everything tends to hustle the unfortunate pack at the very time when they are doing their best to puzzle out a bad scent, although their fox may be only just gone away before them. The hard-riding, hurrying division imagine thereby that the scent must necessarily be a burning one, the fox being hardly out of view; but notwithstanding such may be the case, how often do we find hounds of twenty-five inches, or less, unable to work out a scent, even though they may be laid on the fox itself at times? I have known the expression 'Out of sight, out of scent,' a common one with some packs with whom I have been acquainted. The Royal Meath have been blessed with the very best scenting grass-country in the United Kingdom, and if hounds cannot hunt there, the fault lies with the executive committee from the above-mentioned faults, or else in the strain of blood. A hound that will not 'speak to them' in Meath is useless in any country, in my opinion, judging from the great success we had with the Meath at one time, and also with the Ratoath and other packs of harriers. Every hound should speak, and not flash.

CHAPTER VII.

First mention of horses—Thessalian horsemen—Extinction of Arab horses—Gradual development of use of horses—Wild horses of South America and Tartary—Enormous herds of wild horses—Wild horses in Buenos Ayres—The lasso—A grand breaking-in—Lassoing on the open plain—Gaucha riding-boot—Endurance of Gaucha horse—Wild horses mad with thirst—Tractability of Tartar horses—Horses of Central Africa—Lord Strathnairn's Arab mare—Her death with the Ward hounds—Scarcity of wild Arab horses—The three breeds of Arab horses—Long pedigrees of Arab horses—Arab sold by author to Baron Hastings—Shape of Arab horses—Activity of Arab horses—Arab horse belonging to author—Tractability and sagacity of Arab horses—Test of Arabs of Kochlani breed—Origin of the English thoroughbred horse—Superiority of English thoroughbred horses as compared with Arabs—Match between English horse Recruit and Arab horse Pyramus—Samson and Bay Malton—The Darley Arabian—Flying and Bartlett's Childers and Almanzor—Firetail—Mr. Wilde's performance—Mr. Thornhill's performance—Quibbles—Eclipse—The Godolphin Barb—Original breed of British horses—Infusion of foreign blood by the Romans—King Athelstane—Compensation for horses, A.D. 930—Howell's Act—Trial allowed to purchasers of horses—Act regarding hired horses—Horses forbidden to be used for ploughing—Improvements in horse-breeding by William the Conqueror—Introduction of Spanish blood—Arab given to St. Andrews—Smithfield in twelfth century—Stallions purchased by Richard Cœur-de-Lion—Horse armour—Prices of horses, 1135—Prices of horses, 1155—Improvements in agricultural horses by King John—Lombardy horses purchased by Edward II.—Improvements in breed by Edward III.—Purchase of Spanish horses by Edward III.—Running horses, fourteenth century—Welter weights—Exportation of horses forbidden in Elizabeth's reign—High price of horses—Horses in reign of Henry VII.—Horse laws passed by Henry VIII.—Sir A. Fitzherbert's 'Boke of Husbandry'—Blunderville, his work on riding—Introduction of racing—The Silver Bell—Rules of racing, James I.

—Infusion of Turkish and Barbary blood—Arab purchased by James I.—Purchase of the White Turk—The Helmsley Turk—The Morocco Barb—Racing temp. Charles I.—Oliver Cromwell's racing stud—Royal plates instituted—Purchase of Eastern horses by Charles II.

THE first mention made of horses is in the year 1740 B.C., when they are spoken of as being used in Egypt. When Joseph sent to bring his father into Egypt the waggons were drawn by horses. At that time, however, they were so scarce as not to be generally in use as beasts of burthen; the corn, which in those days was carried hundreds of miles, being conveyed on the backs of asses and camels. Soon after this period, however, they became more numerous, and were, it appears, sufficiently so to horse a considerable portion of the Egyptian army. On the return of the Israelites to Canaan horses had been introduced, for in Joshua xi. 4 mention is made of the Canaanites going out to fight against the Israelites 'with horses and chariots very many.' In the seventh century the Arabs possessed very few horses. The inference, therefore, is that the first known horses came from Egypt.

The Thessalians and the inhabitants of Argos and Athens, Egyptian colonists, were the best horsemen of this period. Thus it may be reasonably supposed that the first horses which the Arabs possessed came from Egypt. Horses doubtless existed for some considerable period before mankind were aware of their value, or that of many other animals, and it is not to be doubted that those animals which were most easily caught and tamed were those which were at first made use of. The benefits derived from these latter subsequently led to the capture and conquest of

the horse. Prior to this, the ass and the camel were utilized, and as the greater power and sagacity of the horse evidenced itself, the use of the last-named animal was, save in Palestine, where the use of the horse was forbidden, almost abandoned. It was some 600 years after the Egyptians had used horses that they were introduced into Arabia, although it is to the latter country that the chief improvements in the breed are due.

Troops of wild horses are to be found in South America and Tartary, but they do not appear to be aboriginal. The Tartar horses are speedy and strong, but are common, whilst those of South America appear to retain the size and shape of their European progenitors unimpaired. They and the horses of the Ukraine alike are the descendants of animals which have made their escape from captivity.

Travellers have stated that when crossing the plains extending from the shores of La Plata to Patagonia they have seen herds of horses which they have computed as numbering as many as ten thousand. Their safety seems to depend on their keeping together; and the master stallions, like the champion stags in herds of deer, keep the rest in subjection. These stallions have also a champion, or leader, the strongest and boldest of the herd, to whom all the rest yield obedience. Should a stranger—a lion, a leopard, or even a man—appear amongst them, and the herd get enclosed by woods, etc., the master champion gives a signal neigh, and the herd immediately close into a dense mass and trample their enemy to death.

A friend of mine in Buenos Ayres has some thousands of wild horses on his estates, and it is most

interesting to watch their manœuvres. The mares and foals are placed in the centre of a circle, and the stallions attack with their heels any enemy which may approach, the leading stallion being the first to face the danger. If it is deemed prudent to retire, he leads the way, followed by the remainder. It is unsafe for anyone to approach the herd if not mounted on horseback, and even then the leader will place himself between the herd and anyone who may ride up to look at them.

When a horse is wanted it has to be lassoed. Every native of the United Provinces and Chili carries a lasso. This latter is made of several strips of raw hide, plaited together like the thong of a whip, and kept supple with grease ; it is about half an inch in diameter throughout, and from forty to sixty feet long. The length most generally used is forty feet. The running noose is formed by the lasso being passed through an iron ring of about an inch and a half in diameter. The Gaucho is always mounted when he uses the lasso, one end of which is fixed to the saddle-girth ; the rest is carefully coiled in his left hand, leaving about twelve feet, which forms the noose end, to form the coil, which latter he holds in his right hand. When galloping up alongside, or within reach of the horse he wishes to catch, he casts the lasso by swinging the thong horizontally round the wild horse's head, the weight of the iron ring, by the continued circular motion, giving sufficient force to project the noose the whole length of the line.

When a grand breaking-in is determined upon, an entire herd is driven into a corral. The capitar, or chief Gaucho, mounted on a strong horse, quietly enters

the corral, and having lassoed a young horse, pulls it to the gate. The difficulty is to induce it to leave its companions, and the instant he is out he invariably tries to gallop away, but a timely jerk of the lasso effectually prevents his doing so. The peons on foot then run up and throw a lasso over his fore-legs, just above the fetlock, and giving it a sharp twitch, pull his legs so suddenly from under him, that at times it almost appears as if they had killed him. In an instant a Guacho sits on its head, cuts off the mane with his knife, and another cuts its tail as short as is necessary, to mark it and show that it has been mounted. A strong halter, with a piece of hide for a bit, is then fitted on its head, and the Gaucho who has to mount it puts on a pair of long, sharp spurs, and two men seize the horse by the ears while he puts on the saddle, which is fastened on as tightly as possible. He then catches hold of an ear and vaults into the saddle, and the man who holds the halter throws him the end of it. He is then left to his own resources, and no more notice is taken of him, unless, perhaps, a visitor who is witnessing the performance for the first time happens to be present. Then commences a course of 'bucking' altogether different from anything any English horse is capable of, but the Gaucho's long, sharp spurs soon set the horse going, and in less than an hour's time there may probably be seen a dozen Gauchos each astride of a wild horse, all fighting to get the better of them. It is curious to watch the different behaviour of the horses when being saddled. Some of them will scream with rage, some lie down and roll on the ground; and others again will stand without being held, with their legs planted stiffly in unnatural

positions and their necks arched and turned towards their tails. These latter are the most vicious of all, and so obstinate that they are most difficult to conquer. All this having taken place, it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to induce them to return to the corral. They will do anything and everything to avoid returning to it. Eventually, however, whip and spur succeed in forcing them in, and they become quite subdued; the saddles and bridles are taken off, and the poor brutes follow one another in quietly enough.

I have in a previous chapter explained the Gaucho system of learning to fall. It would appear that the trial to the man in the latter case is as severe as that used in the subjugation of the horse. When the wild horse is captured in the open plain, the Gaucho selects a horse to ride which is trained to the work, and he gallops until he gets near enough to cast the lasso round the two hind-legs, and, riding a little on one side of the horse he wishes to catch, he gives the entangled leg a lateral jerk, which throws the horse on his side without endangering his knees or his head, and before the animal has time to recover the shock, the rider dismounts, and snatching his 'poncho,' or cloak, from his shoulders, wraps it round the horse's head and so blinds him. He then forces a powerful bit into the mouth, straps a saddle on to his back, and, having mounted, removes the cloak, when the horse commences to do all he can to get his rider off, rearing, plunging, and bucking, etc.; but in a very short space of time he finds his efforts are unavailing, and he is reduced to obedience, and he himself is utilized to assist in the capture of his companions.

These Gauchos use a very peculiar kind of riding-boot, which is made in the following manner: The ham and part of the leg skin of a young colt is stripped off—this skin is very white and beautifully soft; the ham portion forms the calf of the boot, the hock being suitable to very easily receive the heel; the leg forms the foot. Thus a very comfortable riding-boot, with an aperture to admit of the great toe projecting through, is formed. These Gaucho horses, and the Spanish also, are wonderfully enduring, and it is by no means unusual for them to travel a hundred miles in a day.

When water is scarce these animals go mad with thirst, and trample each other to death in great numbers. Were it not for such periodical thinnings they would probably become too numerous.

The Tartar horses are more tractable than those of South America, and are easily broken; but they will, nevertheless, invariably kill any strange horse which may approach them, unless it is ridden by a man.

Mr. Tully, who wrote a history of Tripoli, speaks of the horses in Central Africa as being more beautiful than those of Arabia or Barbary, and describes them as possessing the best qualities of both breeds, and that the horses which are bred near the Coast of Guinea are very inferior, being small, weakly, unsafe, and very difficult to tame.

Until some twenty-five years ago I never saw an Arab mare in this country, when the late Lord Strathnairn (then Sir Hugh Rose) brought one to Ireland, and very much against my advice he made his A.D.C., Captain Wilkin, ride her to the meet of the Ward Union Hounds, where she was very much admired. I regret to say that she broke her back at the very first

fence. It was a sad pity, for she would have been most invaluable to breed from.

It appears by all accounts that few, if any, wild horses at present exist in the Arabian desert, by reason of the Bedouins having hunted them down for the sake of their flesh, which they consider a great delicacy.

There are three distinct breeds of horses in Arabia—viz., the Attechi, which is an inferior breed, and of but little value; the Kadischi, or horses of unknown pedigree—a mixed, half-caste breed; and the Kochlani, whose genealogy the Arabs assert to date back some two thousand years.

I myself have seen an Arab pedigree of four hundred years; and I am sure that my friend, Mr. Wilfrid Blunt, can produce some still older.

I sold a great beauty to the late Baron Hastings, which, had it not been a gelding, would have been worth a thousand pounds. One, which was not nearly so handsome, belonging to the late Mr. Conolly, of Castletown, sold for that sum many years ago.

The Arabs think infinitely more of the pedigrees of their horses than that of their own families. They have taught us the most important lesson in breeding horses—viz., that the mare is the more important factor. I do not by any means consider that the shape of the average Arab horse is by any means perfection; but one can expect to get staying-power out of an Arab mare, and can, by judicious mating with our own thoroughbreds, obtain a most perfect head, broad, square forehead, fine, short muzzle, prominent and brilliant eye, the smallest of ears, and the most beautiful course of veins, which characteristics every foal from

out of an Arab mare should possess. If the Arab is light in body or narrow-chested, we can correct these faults by judicious mating. The Arab which I owned was, though perfect in the points which I have described above, somewhat light-ribbed and narrow-chested, but behind the forearm the barrel swelled out in the most extraordinary manner, thereby affording the fullest play for the lungs, and indicating great staying-power. The shoulder was perfect, and, contrary to most Arabs, the withers were not too high. The shoulder-blades sloped well back, and were so well adjusted that in descending a hill the point of the ham never ruffled the skin. Although his legs appeared small, they were flat and wiry. The pasterns were very oblique, so much so that I imagined they must be weak; such, however, was not the case, for they were as strong as iron. In height, this horse was about 14 hands 2 inches.

The feats which Arab horses are able to perform are due, so anatomists have informed me, to the wonderful density of their bones, and their muscular forearms and thighs.

I once when in Paris had an Arab given me, as no one there could ride it. Knowing that I should be likely to have a long and difficult task to conquer it, and being unwilling to make an exhibition of myself, I started to ride it at six o'clock one morning near the Arc de Triomphe, intending to ride it to the Bois de Boulogne if I could. Such an acrobatic performance I never experienced either before or since. It would take too much space to attempt to describe all that horse did and tried to do—however, I may truthfully state that it did everything a horse could do,

except roll. Half-past eight still saw me in the same spot, no nearer to the Bois than I was at six o'clock. The brother of the man to whom the horse had previously belonged happened to be going out for a ride with his sister, and saw me, and remarked, 'The sooner you get off that horse and walk home the better, for he has lost one of the hoofs off his fore-feet, and will most probably kill you,' etc. To my surprise and disgust I discovered that not only had the brute very badly overreached, but had actually pulled half of his hoof off with the shoe. I have always understood that, for his size, no horse can compare with an Arab in point of strength, and that morning's work most conclusively proved to me that such is the case. After a time this horse got quite fond of me, and I often rode him in the Row, but he invariably attracted so much attention as to be a nuisance, and so I sold him.

I shall never forget Mr. Rice's face when one day I rode into his yard in Piccadilly and asked for stable-room, to enable me to get away from the crowd. He said, 'I never saw a head and neck like this Arab's;' and he was perhaps one of the best judges in the United Kingdom. He certainly was a lovely horse.

Arabs are, without doubt, the most tractable of all horses, and when they are treated with kindness from the time they are foaled, become as affectionate as dogs, and will use their every power in the service of their master, and evince the most wonderful sagacity.

The Arabs have, however, a most cruel and peculiar method of testing if a horse is of the pure Kochlani breed. They take a young three-year-old, which has never before been mounted, and having galloped it for some fifty or sixty miles, ride it into a lake up to

the belly. If, when it is taken out of the water, it at once eats grass, it is proved to be of the pure breed. This is asserted to be the mode in which they prove their mares for breeding. One would be disposed to conclude that most of them must become broken-winded, and there is probably some milder and less cruel test which is more generally used if they possess any sound horses at all.

In the latter part of the reign of Queen Anne, Mr. Darley had recourse to the hitherto despised Arab, and he had a great deal of prejudice to contend with at first, but at last the Darley Arabian attracted attention, and to him we are indebted for the unrivalled beauty, speed, and strength of our present breed of horses, which we can boast of being the very best in the whole world.

A great difference of opinion exists as to the origin of our thoroughbred horse. Some writers assert that both sire and dam owe their origin to Eastern parentage. For my own part I am inclined to side with those who affirm that our present thoroughbred horse has been produced by crossing our own native breed with those of Arabia, Turkey and Barbary. The Stud-Book, however, shows all the old racehorses as having sprung from Eastern blood, and traces their pedigree until it disappears in uncertainty at a very early period of breeding. If, therefore, we require a pedigree, we trace it back to a certain point and end with some well-known racehorse. If it is desired to go still further back we find it end with some Eastern horse, or that it is lost in obscurity. Anyhow, our climate agrees with the foreign strain which has been transferred to it, and careful mating and crossing have

succeeded in producing our English thoroughbred horse, which no horse in the world can excel or equal in quality or speed. This latter has been proved from time to time, and years ago in the time of a horse named *Recruit*, an English horse of but moderate reputation, which beat the celebrated Arab *Pyramus*, the best Arab in the Bengal Presidency.

The countless herds of wild horses in South America are said to be descended from but two stallions and four mares, therefore an even smaller importation would have been sufficient to horse a country of but one-tenth the size.

For over a hundred years the strictest attention has been paid to the pedigree of our thoroughbred horses, and, therefore, those of the present day should be absolutely perfect.

Neither *Samson* nor *Bay Malton* were innocent of a slight suspicion of plebeian blood, albeit their shape and performances went far to disprove the fact ; though it was beyond dispute, still, it was nevertheless very difficult to detect its presence as far as appearance or performances went. As a rule the very slightest admixture of impure blood is discernible, and evidences its presence by the absence of the pluck and 'bottom' which is so marked a characteristic of the clean bred animal.

The *Darley Arabian*, the ancestor of our racing stock, was purchased by Mr. *Darley's* brother at *Aleppo*, and was bred near to *Palmyra*. From the description given of his shape he must have been as perfect as a horse could well be. Amongst his immediate descendants may be mentioned *Flying Childers*, *Bartlett's Childers*, and *Almanzor*. The

second-named horse was never trained. It was through the two Childerses that the Darley Arabian became so famous.

Flying Childers, or Devonshire, as he was sometimes called, was named after Mr. Childers, of Carr House, who bred him and sold him to the Duke of Devonshire. He was the speediest horse of his day, and it is said that he galloped a mile in a minute, though this statement is not well authenticated. He ran 3 miles 6 furlongs in 6 minutes and 40 seconds over a course at Newmarket, and 4 miles 1 furlong and 138 yards in 7 minutes and 30 seconds over the Old Beacon course.

In the year 1772 a horse, aptly named Firetail, ran a mile in 1 minute and 4 seconds.

In 1741 Mr. Wilde rode 127 miles in 9 hours, a record which was beaten by Mr. Thornhill, who rode the 213 miles from Stilton to London in 11 hours and 34 minutes, thus maintaining an average pace of 20 miles an hour, allowing for changes, turnpike roads, and uneven ground.

In 1762 Mr. Shaftoe, with ten horses, rode five of them twice and covered 50 miles and a quarter in 1 hour and 40 minutes. In 1763 he performed a still greater feat, riding 100 miles a day during 29 days on one horse chosen out of twenty-nine horses, he making his own selection daily. He only used fourteen horses out of the twenty-nine, and one day rode 160 miles because his first horse tired.

A horse named Quibbler, belonging to Mr. Hull, ran in 1786 23 miles in 57 minutes 10 seconds at Newmarket.

The celebrated Eclipse was got by a horse named Marsk, out of a mare named Spiletta; Marsk being

out of a mare by Bartlett's Childers, and Spiletta by Regulus, out of a mare named Mother Western. They say that Eclipse never met with an opponent which was able to make him thoroughly extend himself. He was bred by the Duke of Cumberland, and at the death of the latter he passed into the hands of a Mr. Wildman, a meat salesman, for seventy-five guineas. A Colonel O'Kelly purchased a share in him, and in the following spring became his sole owner. He was a thick-winded horse, and made a noise which was audible a long way off, so that he did not make his appearance on the turf until he was five years old. Colonel O'Kelly backed him heavily for his first race in May, 1769, and thus suspicions of his powers were aroused, and he was watched during his canters. A Mr. Lawrence, who went to see him, arrived too late, but meeting an old woman who had been gathering sticks close by the ground he was trained over, Mr. Lawrence asked her if she had seen the race. She said, 'Yes, I saw two horses, but I did not know if it was a race; but I saw a horse with white legs running away at a monstrous pace from another horse, which I am quite sure would never catch him if he ran to the world's end.'

The first heat in the race was won easily, and Colonel O'Kelly, seeing that his horse had not been extended, offered to place the horses for the next heat, which offer appearing improbable, he got a heavy stake on, and then offered to back Eclipse to win and the rest nowhere. Eclipse came in a long way ahead of the field, and no other horse was even placed, thus landing a big win for the Colonel.

In the following spring he beat the hitherto unde-

feated horse Bucephalus, belonging to Mr. Wentworth. Two days afterwards he distanced a very good horse named Pensioner, belonging to a Mr. Strode; and in the following August he won the great Subscription Stakes at York. No horse could be found to run against him, so he was allowed to walk over for the King's Plate at Newmarket in October, 1770. He was never beaten and never paid forfeit, and won £20,000 for his owner.

As a stallion, he got the enormous number of 354 winners, which netted for their owners more than a hundred and sixty thousand pounds, exclusive of plates and cups. He died in 1789 at the age of twenty-five years.

The celebrated Godolphin Barb, the property of Lord Godolphin, was picked up in France, where he was drawing a cart. A son of his, named Lath, turning out a marvellously good horse, brought him into great request. He, though a Barb, was called an Arab, and as a sire for the getting of thoroughbred stock was preferred to the Darley Arabian.

It is stated that the most curious affection existed between this horse and a cat, which was always either nestled on his back or somewhere near him. When he died in 1753, being then twenty-nine years old, the cat refused to eat, and pined away and died from sheer grief.

A somewhat similar story is recounted by a Mr. Holcroft, who mentions a racehorse which was so fond of a cat, that it would pick it up with its mouth without hurting it and place it on its back.

As regards our own original British breed of horses, no account is extant prior to the Roman invasion,

when horses were used as chariot horses. Judging from the dexterity with which these horses were managed, it may be reasonably argued that they were both quick and powerful, and from the absence of any proper roads they must have been very active. What breed they were it is, of course, impossible to determine. Evidently they were esteemed to be valuable, as Cæsar exported many of them to Rome, where they were held in high repute and were much sought after. The first cross here given to them was from the horses which the Romans imported with the cavalry which they brought over in order to check the frequent insurrections of the natives, by maintaining a chain of outposts. From this crossing by the Roman horses a variety of French, Italian, and Spanish blood was infused. But nothing further is heard of the breed until the reign of Athelstane, who began to turn his attention towards its improvement. Amongst the many gifts which he received from Hugh Capet, of France, who had married his sister, were some German racing stallions, which fresh infusion must have been as beneficial as requisite after so long a lapse of time.

In 930 Athelstane decreed that no horse should be allowed out of the country, save as a royal gift. There is a very interesting document, dated A.D. 1000, which gives the following description of the law relating to horses in those days :

If a horse was destroyed or lost through ignorance, the compensation demanded was thirty shillings.

The value set on a mare or colt was twenty shillings, that on a mule or ass twelve shillings, an ox thirty pence, a cow twenty-four pence, a pig eight pence, and, strange to say, that on a man was reckoned one

pound only—the Anglo-Saxon pound being equivalent to forty shillings.

In the laws of Howell the Good, Prince of Wales, which were passed before this time, the value of a foal under fourteen days old was fixed at five pence; at a year and a day old, at forty-eight pence; and at three years old, at sixty pence. It was then broken in, and its value raised to a hundred and twenty pence. A wild and unbroken horse was valued at sixty pence.

Even in those days frauds were so common that the purchaser of a horse was allowed time to ascertain if it was free from three named diseases. He was allowed three nights to prove that he was free from staggers; three months to prove him free from inflammation of the lungs or pipes; and one year to ascertain, if it were an old horse, that he was free from glanders.

For every blemish discovered after purchase, one-third of the purchase-money was returned, except in the case of a blemish of the ears or face.

When horses were hired out, in the case of abuse, the Act thus provided:

‘Whosoever shall borrow a horse and rub the hair so as to gall the back, shall pay four pence; if the skin is forced into the flesh, eight pence; if the flesh is forced to the bone, sixteen pence.’

There is no mention made of horses being used for ploughing in those days, and in England, as in other countries, bullocks were, until a comparatively recent period, used for the purpose. However, about the tenth century an attempt to use horses for ploughing was evidently made, for we find a law enacted by the Welsh, forbidding farmers to plough with horses,

mares, or cows, and permitting the use of oxen alone.

In the Bayeux tapestry a man is depicted driving a horse attached to a harrow, and this is the first intimation which we possess of horses being used for field labour. William the Conqueror very much improved the breed of his horses, and to this may be doubtless attributed his success at the Battle of Hastings, by reason of the superiority of his cavalry. His favourite charger was a Spanish horse. Most of his followers came from a country where agriculture was more advanced than in England, and as he divided the kingdom very much between them, it no doubt benefited very much, not only as regards an improved system of husbandry, but also in the breed of horses suitable for agricultural purposes generally, and for lighter and faster work as well.

Some of the Norman barons, Roger de Boulogne, Earl of Shrewsbury, in particular, introduced Spanish horses on their estates. The first Arabian blood, at least the first which is recorded, was introduced by Henry I. in 1121.

Alexander I., King of Scotland, presented to the monastery and church of St. Andrew, amongst other costly gifts, a splendid Arabian horse. The good monks, however, make no mention in their histories as to how the breed got on in their hands. In the reign of Henry II. Smithfield is spoken of as being the principal horse mart of the time.

The Crusaders do not appear to have taken advantage of the opportunity afforded them of acquiring the best of the Eastern horses, since no mention is made of their having done so which is authentic, though

they must surely have done so ; and Richard Cœur-de-Lion is recorded to have bought two splendid stallions of Eastern origin at Cyprus and brought them to England.

In those days a war-horse was as well protected as his rider, and at times completely clad in armour, and horse-furniture generally, if cumbrous and heavy, was what may be termed not a little 'smart,' as may be gathered from the amount of gilding on the bridles then styled 'brigliadores,' or 'bridles of gold.'

In the year 1135 the price of horses is somewhat interesting, for fifteen mares sold for £2 12s. They were purchased by the king, who, to make something out of the bargain, distributed them amongst his tenantry, charging them four shillings apiece for them.

Twenty years later ten fine horses were sold for £20 apiece, and twelve years later still a pair which were sent to Lombardy fetched £38 13s. 8d., the usual price being £10 for a good sound horse ; the hire of one for a day was fixed at 2d.

King John further improved the breed of agricultural horses by importing a hundred selected stallions from Flanders, and from these sprang our magnificent breed of draught-horses, now so justly famed.

A hundred years afterwards, Edward II. purchased thirty Lombardy war-horses and twelve heavy draught-horses. At that period, Lombardy, Italy, and Spain possessed the best cavalry horses, Flanders being celebrated for its agricultural horses.

Edward III. devoted the sum of 1,000 marks for the purchase of fifty Spanish horses ; and so valuable were they, that a formal application to the kings of

France and Spain was made to grant them safe conduct. By the time they arrived in this country they were computed to have cost the large sum of £13 6s. 8d., equal to about £160 of our present money. During this reign mention is made of the king possessing what were termed 'running horses,' the precise meaning of which is not very clear, but we may conclude that reference is made to light riding or harness horses, in contradistinction to the heavy cavalry horses which were in use at that time. The value of these horses was assessed at £3 apiece. Edward III. seems to have been a sportsman, and as he is related to have possessed 'speedy horses,' it may be reasonably concluded that he tried their speed against each other—in other words, went in for racing. In those days the knights in full armour averaged some twenty-four stone, thereby necessitating the use of horses of enormous strength, animals which must have been very much of the class used by the brewers of the present day. Very dreadful they must have been as hacks, and very tiring to ride, especially at a gallop.

This state of things existed until the introduction of firearms, when armour was no longer required to withstand the blows of the battle-axes and bludgeons which had been previously in vogue. As a natural result the horses used for cavalry purposes gradually decreased in size and weight and increased in activity and speed, and thus a better bred horse was necessary and the old ponderous war-horse fell into disuse. Edward forbade the exportation of a single horse under the most severe penalties, and foreigners were thereby unable to cross their own breeds with the

English. Even at as late a date as the reign of Elizabeth the exportation of English horses into Scotland was forbidden, and the infringement of this law was treated as a felony. In the time of Richard II. the horse-dealers demanded such exorbitant prices for horses that his Majesty was forced to interfere, and he therefore ruled that the prices of horses should be the same as they had been during the previous reigns. This proclamation was ordered to be posted in the principal horse-breeding districts of Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, and the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire.

When Henry VII. came to the throne he further altered the law by prohibiting the exportation of stallions, but allowing that of mares over two years old, the latter being under the value of 6s. 6d.

Henry VIII. fixed a certain standard, below which no horse should be kept. The lowest height for a stallion was 15 hands; for a mare 13 hands; and no stallion over two years of age or under 14 hands 2 inches was permitted to run in any forest, moor, or common where there were mares. The magistrates were ordered to drive all the forests and commons every year at Michaelmas, and to destroy all stallions and mares which they considered useless for breeding purposes. He further ordered that every deer-park should be stocked with a certain proportion of pony mares of 13 hands; and that all his prelates and nobles, and those whose wives wore velvet bonnets, should keep stallions, suitable for getting saddle-horses, of at least 15 hands.

Sir A. Fitzherbert, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, wrote a work entitled 'A Boke of Husbandry.' This work being now very rare, an extract from it

may prove of interest to the reader. Evidently mares had been forbidden to be used for agricultural purposes, as he says in his book: 'A husbände may not be without horses and mares, and specially if he goe with horse with a horse-ploughe he must have both, his horses to draive, his mares to brynge colts to upholde his stocke, and yet at many times may draive well if they be well handled.'

The learned judge evidently got often bit in his horse-dealing transactions as well as other people, for he says: 'Thou grasyer, that mayst fortune to be of myne opinion or condytion to love horses, and beguiled as I have been a hundred tymes and more. And, first, thou shalt knowe that a good horse has fifty-four properties—that is to say, two of a man, two of a badger, four of a Lion, nine of an ox, nine of a hare. nine of a foxe, nine of an asse, and ten of a woman.' I fear to weary the reader with the well-known similes, but if there should be anyone who does not know them, I will here recount them for his benefit, though they do not quite tally with the learned judge's assertion: Three qualities of a woman—viz., a broad breast, round hips, and long mane; three of a lion—viz., countenance, courage, and fire; three of a bullock—viz., the eye, the nostril, and the joints; three of a sheep—viz., the nose, gentleness, and patience; three of a mule—viz., strength, constancy, and foot; three of a deer—viz., head, legs, and short hair; three of a wolf—viz., throat, neck, and hearing; three of a fox—viz., ears, tail, and trot; three of a serpent—viz., memory, sight, and power of turning; three of a hare or cat—viz., running, walking, and suppleness.

Despite the efforts of Henry VIII., which, by the

way, were somewhat tyrannical, horses of all kinds became exceedingly scarce, and the breed was by no means improved. When England was threatened with invasion by Philip of Spain, Queen Elizabeth could only muster three thousand cavalry to oppose his landing.

Blunderville, who at this time wrote on the art of riding, asserts that these horses were a very poor lot. The secret of crossing had not been discovered. He says that they were only fitted for slow draught work. The one light horse which he speaks of as showing a turn of speed, he says did eighty miles in one day.

Regular races were at first started without the course being marked out. They ran to 'train scent' across country, the most difficult courses being selected; mounted men were stationed at intervals to flog on the beaten horses. About this time the prize of the silver bell was started; previously the winner received a wooden bell, which was decorated with flowers. This was now exchanged for one of silver.

The first rules of racing which were of any importance were drawn up in the last year of the reign of James I., who was very fond of sport. His ideas of racing in Scotland were merely 'time races,' but the distances run were at times cruelly long. His favourite courses were at Croydon and on Enfield Chase. The Turkish and Barbary blood was introduced as a cross, but it was by no means successful; so he tried the infusion of Arab blood, doubtless having heard of the magnificent Arab which was given five centuries previously to St. Andrew's, and whose offspring had evidently made a name for themselves. He therefore purchased a fine Arab for £500 from

a merchant named Markham. The Duke of Newcastle, who wrote a very good book on horses and horsemanship, took a great dislike to this horse, which he described as a small, bony animal, of ordinary shape, and set him down as useless, because after being trained he could not race. In consequence of this opinion the Arab was not adopted by English breeders for nearly a hundred years afterwards. James also purchased an Eastern horse of Mr. Place, who was afterwards stud-master to Oliver Cromwell. This beautiful horse was called the White Turk, and his name, as also that of his keeper, will be long remembered.

After this the Helmsley Turk was introduced by the Duke of Buckingham, and he again was followed by Fairfax's Morocco Barb. It is to this last horse, which changed the breed, that we are indebted for the first racehorses which could really gallop. Charles I. was fond of racing, and established races in Hyde Park and at Newmarket just previous to his rupture with the Parliament. Cromwell started the first stud of racehorses, the Civil Wars having proved the utility of fast-galloping horses. At the restoration Royal Plates were given to be run for at Newmarket and the principal meetings. Charles II. sent his Master of the Horse to the Levant with orders to purchase broodmares and stallions. These horses were most probably Barbs and Turks.

CHAPTER VIII.

Teeth of foal—Teeth: structure of; six months old; eighteen months old—Wolf teeth: two years old—Bishoping—Anecdote of bishoping—Soreness of mouth during dentition—Mouth: three years old; three and a half years old; four years old; four and a half years old; five years old; six years old; seven years old; eight years old; nine, ten, and eleven years old; fourteen and seventeen years old; twenty-one years old—Marks of old age—Paganini (thirty-one years old)—Diseases—Ignorance of horse-show judges—Ignorance of dealers—The horse compared to a machine—Glanders—Mistaken opinion of veterinary surgeons respecting glanders—The frontal sinus—Treatment for mistaken glanders, and the detection of the true disease—The ear—Intention and disposition indicated by the motion of the ear—Power of hearing in the horse—Cropping condemned—The eye—The feelers—The haw—Eye too prominent, or the reverse—Transparency and cloudiness—Care necessary in examination of sight of horse prior to purchase—Mode of examination—Frequent cause of ophthalmia—Soundness of sight imperative in breeding stock—Carpet of the eye—The choroid coat of the eye—Varying colour of eye in different animals—The pupil of the eye—Dilation and contraction of the pupil of the eye—The eye indicative of disposition—Care necessary in singeing—Cataract.

SINCE I remarked in the prefatory pages of the present work that it is my desire to make it instructive as well as amusing so far as in me lies, I think that a few pages devoted to the method of ascertaining the age of a horse, as also reference to some of the diseases which horses are liable to, will be hardly out of place, and may also prove of service to the reader.

A few days after the birth of a foal the first and

second grinder teeth make their appearance, and when it is eight or ten days old the two central incisor teeth, which are also termed 'nippers,' begin to show, and at that age both nippers and grinders are apparently somewhat over-long for the size of the jaw. In the course of a month a third grinder appears above and below ; and about the age of six weeks another incisor (nipper) is shown on each side of the first two, which have by this time grown considerably, but have not attained their full level. At two months old, however, they will have done so ; and by the time the foal is three months old the second pair will have overtaken them. At this age they will commence to wear slightly, and their outer edges, which were at first somewhat raised and sharp, are brought to a level with the inner edge, and in this condition the mouth remains until between the sixth and ninth months, when another nipper makes its appearance on either side of the four already shown, on both the upper and lower jaws. There are at this time, therefore, six nippers in the upper and six in the lower jaws, and the mouth at this stage may be said to be complete, as far as these incisor teeth are concerned. No further change takes place, save as regards the wearing of the teeth, until between two and three years of age. I have used the term 'nipper' as being that commonly in use, and as also more expressive than the term 'incisor,' for it is with these teeth that grass, etc., is nipped off and gathered.

The teeth are covered with a very hard substance termed 'enamel ;' indeed, so hard is it that a file can hardly make any impression on it. This enamel is spread over that portion of the teeth which appears

above the gum ; a portion of it also passes over their upper surface, and bending inwards, is sunk into the body of the tooth itself, forming a kind of pit in them. It is the inside and bottom of this which constitutes what is called the 'mark,' and this mark, by wearing down, enables the age of a horse to be ascertained. Dealers talk of the filling up of the teeth. This is nonsense ; the mark never fills up, but the ridge of enamel round it is worn down, and the discolouration, caused by the action of the food, is also rubbed off.

The colt's nipping teeth are rounded in front, recurved, being somewhat hollow towards the mouth, and present at first a cutting surface, with the outer edge rising in a slanting direction above the inner edge. This, however, soon begins to wear down, until both surfaces are level, and the 'mark,' which was originally long and narrow, becomes shorter, and wider, and fainter.

At six months the four central nippers in both upper and lower jaws are beginning to wear level, and the corner teeth are quite so. The mark in the two middle teeth is wide and indistinct, in the two next to them it is darker, and longer, and narrower, and in the corner teeth its colour, width, and length are most marked.

At the age of eighteen months the mark in the central nippers will be fainter and shorter, that in the two other pairs will have undergone evident change, and all will be flat, and at two years old this change will be still more manifest. About this time an additional 'grinder' makes its appearance and another process takes place. Up to the present time the first

teeth were sufficient for the wants of the young animal, and were large enough to occupy and fill the jaw ; but as the latter increases in size with age, the teeth are separated too far from each other to be of use, and so another and larger set becomes needful. Gradually the second set press on the roots or fangs of the first, and the result is that the latter are forced out ; but the part pressed on disappears, and is in a manner, so to speak, absorbed, and the root being pressed sideways it diminishes throughout its whole bulk. The crown of the tooth also diminishes with the root, and the whole is pushed out of its place to the fore part of the first grinder, and remains for a long time under the name of a 'wolf's tooth,' causing swellings, soreness of the gums, and often wounding the cheeks. These teeth should be drawn as soon as perceived.

The above change of teeth commences in those which appeared first, therefore the front, or first grinder, gives way at the age of two years, and is succeeded by a larger and permanent tooth. It is at this period that dishonest dealers perform what is termed 'bishoping.' I may as well here quote a somewhat amusing incident in connection with this 'art.' One day, when at an auction at Farrell's, in Dublin, I noticed a very well-shaped mare in a dark corner stall, and I requested a man standing by her, apparently the owner's groom, to bring her out into the light for me to see her, but this he refused to do. Knowing the rules before auction, I ordered a lad to bring her out, and what I saw induced me to send her on to Mr. Ferguson, at that time the best veterinary surgeon in Dublin, with a note from me to the following effect :
'Please examine this mare's mouth.—Yours, J. H. C.'

On her return a most interesting certificate came back with her, viz., ' I have this day examined a mare which has been tampered with in the teeth, and made to appear "four off," whereas, from other well-known appearances, she must be at least sixteen years old.'

This was somewhat of a 'stopper,' and the mare, for which £140 was asked as being four years old, was naturally not worth £15. The man who claimed to be her owner disappeared, but we afterwards found out all about him. He had been coachman to a nobleman for years, and was discharged for some very sufficient reason. What became of him I do not know.

Bishoping can be managed at certain ages, but it is by no means always an easy matter to impose on people, since, by examining the upper jaw, evidence can be obtained which will ensure the detection of such rascality. It is, as a rule, used to make a young animal appear older, and, therefore, more saleable, and this is, of course, a very much easier performance than trying to make an animal, such as the one referred to, which was evidently a very aged one, appear young.

Two-year-olds frequently get sore in the mouth when changing their teeth, and when such is the case it becomes necessary to feed them on mashes and soft food generally, otherwise they will fall off in condition, and never grow into large horses. It is perhaps the one age which requires the greatest amount of care and good feeding.

In the mouth of the three-year-old the central teeth are larger than the others, with two grooves in the outer convex surface of the tooth, and the mark is long, narrow, deep, and black, and not having at this period

attained to their full growth, they are not up so high as the others, the mark in the two next nippers is nearly worn out, and in the corner nippers it is wearing away. It is quite possible to give this mouth to an early two-year-old. The ages of all horses are reckoned from the 1st of May (saving thoroughbreds, which reckon their age from the 1st of January). But some horses are foaled as early as December and January. If such horses are well fed and taken proper care of, they may be taken for three-year-olds. But the experienced hand can tell as easily by the shape of the forehead and general form of the animal as a novice can by means of the teeth. The teeth of the upper jaw tell their own tale, if any suspicious soreness exists in the gums, by reason of the baby-teeth having been removed, and the continuance of the mark on the next pair of nippers will also of itself betray that foul play has been used to make the mouth look older than it really is. Those who backed *Gladiateur* (as I did for all I could get on him) are not likely to forget him. I did not see his mouth, but as regards his appearance, he looked like a five-year-old; and I 'lumped' it on him for the Derby and also for the Grand Prix. The question as to his age was, I believe, for some time a matter of dispute.

So, then, three-year-olds should have the central permanent nippers growing, the other two pairs wasting, six grinder teeth in each jaw, the first and fifth being level with the others, and the sixth protruding. The sharp edges of the new nippers will be very apparent when compared with the neighbouring teeth.

At three and a half the next pair of nippers will be

changed, and the mouth then is very unmistakable. The central nippers will have very nearly attained their full growth, a hollow will be left where the second pair stood (or the new ones will be just beginning to show above the gum), and the corner teeth will be diminished in breadth, worn down, and the mark will be becoming small and faint. At this period the second pair of grinders will likewise be shed, and it is just previously to this that the dishonest dealers endeavour to make the mouth appear like that of a four-year-old; but this can easily be detected in the manner I have before described.

At four years old the central nippers will be perfectly developed, and their sharp edges somewhat worn, and the mark shorter, wider, and fainter. The next pair will be up, but still small and the mark deep, and extending quite across them, and the corner nippers will be larger than the inside ones, yet smaller than they were, and flat, and their marks nearly effaced. The sixth grinder will also have risen to a level with the others, and the tusks will have begun to appear. Any tricks played on a mouth at this stage are very easily detected. Dealers endeavour to encourage the tusk to show, so as to make the mouth appear like that of five years of age, but it will not always show, even when the gum is lanced.

At four and a half, or nearly five years, the last important change takes place. The corner nippers are shed, and the permanent ones commence to appear. The central nippers are considerably worn, and the pair next to them are beginning to show marks of usage. The tusk has now come through, and is fully half an inch in height. The latter, viewed ex-

ternally, is a rounded prominence, with a groove on either side.

At five years of age the mouth is perfect. The corner nippers are quite up, with the long deep mark irregular on the inside, and the other nippers bear evident tokens of increased wear. The tusk is much grown, the grooves have almost disappeared, and the outer surface is regularly convex, but inside it is still concave, and the edge is nearly as sharp as it was six months previously. The sixth molar is quite up, and the third molar is wanting. This condition of the mouth is a sufficient guide to prevent the substitution of a late four-year-old for a five being successful, especially if the general appearance of the animal, the wearing of the centre nippers, and the growth and shape of the tushes receive due consideration. The nippers may be forced up a few months before their time and the tushes a few weeks, but the grinders are not so easily displaced. The tushes and the three last grinders are never shed.

At six years old the mark in the central nippers is worn out, though there will still be a difference of colour in the centre of the tooth, the hollow caused by the dipping in of the enamel presenting a browner line than the other part of the tooth, and there will remain a slight depression round this casing of enamel, but the deep hole which previously existed in the centre of the teeth, with the blackened surface it presented and the raised wall of enamel, will have altogether disappeared.

Persons ignorant of such matters have been sorely puzzled at this. They expected to find a plain surface of a uniform colour, and do not know what conclusion

to come to when there is both discolouration and irregularity. At six years old the mouth is shorter, broader, and fainter, and in the corner nippers the edges of the enamel are more regular, and the surface is evidently worn. The tush has attained to its full growth, being nearly or quite an inch in length, convex outwardly and concave inwardly, and tending to a point, and the extremity somewhat recurved. The third grinder is fairly up, and all the grinders are level with each other. Now, or at a period of six months earlier, the horse's mouth may be said to be perfected; all the teeth are fully grown, and have hitherto sustained no material injury.

At seven years old the mark is worn out in the four central nippers, and is also fast disappearing in the corner ones. The tush is also beginning to be altered. It is rounded at the point, rounded at the edges, still round outside, and commencing to get round inside.

At eight years old the mark has gone from all the lower nippers, and the tush is rounder in every way. The mark is now said to be out of the mouth. The horse is 'past mark'; and no positive opinion as to age can be given by means of the lower nippers. Dishonest dealers can, however, make a mark in the lower nippers by 'bishopsing.' This practice, by the way, takes its name from the scoundrel who invented it, and is performed in the following manner. The horse is 'thrown,' and a mark is burned with a hot iron into the tooth. It is, however, at best but so clumsy an imitation of the natural mark that no one but a fool would be taken in by it, for it would be at once apparent to anyone who was conversant with the natural marks in the mouth of a horse.

At eight years old, horses require to be examined for their age in the upper jaw, and conclusions can be approximately arrived at by the appearance of the nippers in that jaw. The mark remains longer in the upper jaw than the lower, by reason of the friction being less ; there is also a greater depth of tooth to be worn away by reason of the upper jaw remaining passive, whereas the lower one is always moved, and thus the friction in the one is greater than that in the other. The tushes are not exposed to wear and tear.

At nine years of age the mark will be worn from the middle nippers ; from the next pair at ten years ; and from the upper nippers at eleven. During these years the tush is undergoing a manifest change ; it is blunter, shorter, and rounder. To what degree this change takes place at the several periods, many and favourable opportunities can alone enable horse-owners to decide ; for I do not myself place implicit reliance in the appearance presented by the tush. Perhaps the safest guide at such ages is afforded by the shape of the surface of the nippers, which at eight years are oval, the length of the oval running across from tooth to tooth ; but as the horse grows older the teeth diminish in size, and this diminution is in their width, and not in their thickness. They become somewhat separated from each other, and their surfaces are rounded. At nine the central nippers are evidently so. At ten the others begin to have the oval shortened. At eleven, the second nippers are quite rounded, and at thirteen the corner ones also have that appearance. At fourteen the faces of the central nippers became somewhat triangular. At seventeen

all are so. At nineteen the angles begin to wear off, and the central teeth are again oval, but in a reversed direction, viz., from outwards to inwards; and at twenty-one they all wear this form.

As a rule, the marks in hunters wear out sooner than is the case with farm-horses, by reason of their getting more hard food. The age of a horse being calculated from the 1st of May, it is difficult at times to tell a late foal or an early one.

At nine and ten years of age, the bars of the mouth also become less prominent, and their regular diminution will evidence advancing age.

At eleven and twelve the lower nippers change their original upright direction, and project forward or horizontally, and become yellow and covered with tartar. They are yellow because, although the teeth must grow to supply the wear and tear to which they are subjected, the enamel which covered their surface cannot be replaced; and that which wears this colour in old age is the part which in youth was in the socket, and therefore destitute of enamel. The upper nippers also become arched, and project over the lower ones, wearing down their outer edges, and by degrees causing that portion which at first was considerably the higher to become the lower.

Old age is also easily discernible by the depth of the hollow over the eyes, the gray hairs over the eyes and about the muzzle, a hanging down of the lips, sharpness of the withers, hollowing of the back, lengthened appearance of the quarters, and disappearance of spavins, windgalls, splints, etc.

The oldest horse which I remember died at the age of thirty-one, at Ratoath Manor, County Meath—a

rare old stamp of racehorse, and a good horse across country, named Paganini.

Thus much for the age of a horse as indicated by his mouth. It now remains for me to consider some of the ills to which horses are liable.

There are few subjects upon which people generally, of all classes, from the nobleman to the stable-helper, are so disinclined to receive advice as upon that of the management of horses. Everyone considers his knowledge to be superior to that of anyone else. We are all much the same, I fear, and consider ourselves to be thoroughly conversant with the subject, albeit even amongst appointed judges at shows there are very few who are really well-informed on such matters as the form, quality and value of a good hunter. The fact is that assumed knowledge is worse than acknowledged total ignorance. Even horse-dealers are not unfrequently very ignorant of the subject on which they, of all people, are supposed to be best informed, and their knowledge is often very limited.

There is, in fact, a great deal of ignorance as to the structural qualifications necessary to ensure a horse being swift, stout, and sound. A horse, like a man, is a machine, the numerous bones constituting so many levers, and the muscles and tendons attached to them representing ropes, which connect them and enable them to act in the direction required.

Very much of the ignorance and prejudice which exist is due to want of knowledge regarding the anatomy of the horse, as also of those diseases to which the animal is more or less subject.

Of all the diseases to which horseflesh is heir, that of glanders is surely the one to be most dreaded. The

disease is one which is very easily detected by examination of the upper part of the cavity of the nostril ; yet I have, nevertheless, experienced many instances in which veterinary surgeons, having given an erroneous opinion, have condemned horses (old ones, of course) to be destroyed for glanders, when all the time they have not been suffering from anything of the kind. For instance, there are larvæ of certain flies which, having crawled up the nostril and lodged themselves in the upper part of the cavity of the nose, produce intense pain and irritation, and cause the eyes and nose to run with water and matter. Doubtless, this may have the appearance of glanders, but the cause is easily removable by a competent veterinary surgeon. The sinus—which is above the eye—must be opened, the opening being made on that part of the frontal bone which lies between the eye and the pit above the latter. The opening being syringed with warm water will afford instant relief to the animal.

Should any matter be present in the frontal sinus, or in any part of the cavity of the nose, it will appear mixed with the water, and such a condition will indicate that the horse is suffering from glanders.

If, however, the water appears mingled with blood and mucus, or is discoloured, no disease exists. The thick, creamy consistency of the pus, its sinking in water, and its capability of being perfectly, although not readily, mixed with water, will serve to distinguish it from the natural running from the nose, which is ropy, lighter than water, and when mixed with it preserves a stringy appearance. The above is the simplest method of distinguishing between the matter which is formed by glanders and that which is natural.

Fortunately, glanders is nowadays but seldom met with as compared with former times, when fewer precautions to prevent the disease spreading were taken; and it is also more readily recognised than formerly, when any such running from the nose was immediately concluded to be evidence of glanders, and the most desperate remedies were resorted to.

The size, setting on, and motion of the ear of the horse are of importance, as all who possess horses and have paid any attention to the subject must be aware. Ears which are rather small, not placed too far apart, erect, and quick in motion, indicate both breeding and spirit; and it may be here remarked that if a horse is in the habit of frequently carrying one ear forward and the other backward, more especially if he does so when being ridden or driven, he will generally be found to possess both spirit and endurance. The fact of the ears being stretched in contrary directions serves to show that he is attentive to everything which is going on around him, and while this is the case he cannot be fatigued, or likely to soon become so. Most horses sleep with one ear pointed forward and the other back, in order that they may hear the approach of anything from either direction. The ear of the horse is one of the most beautiful points, and is more truly indicative of the temper and disposition of the animal even than the eye; and anyone who watches the movements of the former can form a very just opinion as to what the horse intends to do or not to do. As, for instance, if a horse means to bite, he puts his ears flat back and keeps them there; but if he is only playful, they soon come forward again. The rapid change in the position

of the ears, and that in the expression of the eyes, is very plainly indicative of the difference between vice and mere playfulness.

The power of hearing in the horse is so acute, owing to the shape of the ear, that it can readily distinguish sounds at a distance at which we ourselves cannot hear them, and will often detect the cry of the hounds long before they are audible to us. No practice can be a more mistaken one than that of cropping the ears of a horse—it is indeed not only cruel, but a fool's work. Fortunately it is nowadays very rarely done.

Owners of horses are very often in utter ignorance of what takes place in their stables. The cruelty which some grooms, carters especially, are capable of inflicting on the wretched animals in their charge is at times hardly conceivable.

A bad-tempered stableman is indeed a curse, and such individuals are at times little better than savages—indeed, it may be justly said they are infinitely worse, since the latter do not, as a rule, ill-treat their horses, whatever they may be guilty of towards other animals.

Ignorance is often more cruel than vice. At times it happens that in his endeavour to make a horse look as 'neat' as possible (according to his way of thinking), the ignorant groom singes the very eyelashes off the wretched animal; and thus what has been given to him as a protection to his eye from the glare of the sun or from dust is taken away. The 'feelers' on the under lid, so useful, also share the same fate. Touch one of these feelers but ever so lightly, and it is surprising how sensitive they are—a convulsive kind of a twitch at once follows the touch,

and proves how necessary they are as a protection to the eye.

The eye of a horse is more prominent and proportionately very much larger than our own, so much so that were provision not forthcoming to counterbalance this peculiarity, the very greatest annoyance would occur to the animal from the lodgment of dust, sand, insects, etc. This provision is, however, afforded by the lachrymal gland—a large, irregular gland, which secretes an aqueous fluid, which issues from it and is allowed exit by the mere process of winking, and thus washes away all foreign objects. This flow of relief is termed ‘tears,’ and serves to quell any inflammation. I have often seen horses suffer excruciating pain from a blow in the eye, so that when water is observed to be issuing from the eye and running down the cheek, the eye should be examined for the presence of some foreign object, and if this is not discoverable it may be concluded that the eye has received a blow.

There is a very beautiful triangular-shaped membrane which is concealed in the corner of the eye of a horse, and which the latter is able at will to slide like a kind of shutter across the eye, in order to remove any substance, such as dust, flies, etc., which may have lodged on the eyeball, and it also serves as a protection to the eye in event of any danger threatening that organ. The eyeball being withdrawn somewhat back, permits this membrane to pass over it; on the eyeball being again allowed to resume its usual position, the membrane slides back into its place.

At times this membrane may become thickened by reason of inflammation, and cases have not been infrequent in which the cruelty of ignorance has caused

its removal, under the impression that it was a disease, and thus the wretched horse was barbarously tortured and deprived of that protection to its sight which was most essential; whereas the application of some cooling lotion would have speedily reduced the inflammation and consequent thickening of the membrane.

When the eye of a horse is too prominent, or, on the other hand, too small and flat, the rays of light falling upon it are apt to be too convergent in the one case, or not sufficiently so in the other, and the sight is consequently imperfect. Hence horses whose eyes are so formed are apt to shy.

The eye should be perfectly transparent; any cloudiness is indicative of disease. The membrane which covers the eye is very firm and tough, and can with difficulty be pierced, even with a sharp instrument.

In purchasing a horse the greatest care in examining the sight is necessary. In order that the examination may be more fully carried out, it is necessary to back the horse into the doorway of a stable, and to inspect the eye both from the front and back. The better plan is to remove the horse to a darkened stable and to make the examination by means of a candle, when any opacity which may exist is more easily discernible. If any such is visible, it may be concluded that the eye has been subject to inflammation. It is well to remember that any white or gray objects, either on the dress of the examiner or in the vicinity of the horse, will be reflected in the eye, and so may serve to mislead a novice who may attempt to make experiment for himself.

It may be well here to remark that the heat and

poisoned atmosphere of badly-drained, ill-kept stables is very often the cause of ophthalmia, the ammonia which arises from the urine producing inflammation; and in such pestilential 'lodgings' the chances are that sooner or later every horse will suffer from the complaint.

Where stallions have become so affected, their progeny will be almost sure to suffer. The best horse in the world is utterly useless for breeding purposes if his sight has ever been impaired by inflammation, inasmuch as the eyes have thereby become weakened.

In many respects the sight of horses is superior to our own, as, for instance, who has not experienced this to be the case when riding or driving in the dark? The eye of the horse is well worth some study by those who can appreciate such a subject; nor will they fail to admire and wonder at the marvellous provision made by the Almighty in this as in all things made by Him.

In perfectly white and cream-coloured horses, what may be termed the 'carpet' of the eye is of a different colour. The usual colour of the pupil is black, but in such horses it is frequently red. The 'choroid coat,' as it is technically termed, is that which gives the colour, and not the covering, the red being caused by the numberless blood-vessels which are found in its every part.

In all animals the colour of the eye is adapted to suit their modes of life, the 'carpets' varying in colour. Thus in the ox it is green. In the cat, and the different varieties of the tribe, it is yellow; and, as is well known, the eyes of a lion appear like two flaming torches at night, by reason of such little light which

there may be being concentrated on this yellow 'carpet,' and everyone must have at some time remarked the yellow glare which is present in the eyes of the ordinary domestic cat. In the dog and the wolf the colour is, at night, gray. In the badger it is white ; whilst in the ferret, which has to work in the darkness of the rabbit-burrows, etc., it is colourless.

The aperture in the iris is called the pupil, and through it light passes to the inner chamber of the eye. The pupil is oblong, and varies in size in accordance with the intensity or amount of light which falls in the eye. In a darkened stable the pupil expands by reason of the diminished light, but as soon as the horse is brought into the doorway contracts, in order to exclude any more light than the eye can bear. If it were brought exactly opposite to the sun, the contraction would be proportionate, and it would become very markedly reduced in size.

The eye of a horse should be full and large, but not over-prominent, and the eyelid fine and thin. Where the eye is unduly small and deeply sunken, the corners of the lids being puckered up, it may be safely assumed that it is either diseased or has been recently subject to severe inflammation. Such a conclusion may also be formed if one eye is smaller than the other, the smaller one being that which is diseased or has been recently inflamed.

The eye is a very true indicator of a horse's temper. In nine cases out of ten, where an undue amount of the white is shown, it may be concluded that the horse is a vicious-tempered animal, for while it but rarely happens that the cornea of the eye is unnaturally small, yet, if an unusual amount of the white is visible

when the horse is looking sideways or backwards, experience has proved that a mischievous horse is but waiting for the opportunity to 'let fly,' and the frequent backward motion of the eye is but for the purpose of securing the fullest effect to the kick which he meditates delivering.

The greatest care is necessary, when singeing a horse, to prevent the eyelashes being burned, and the hand should be kept placed on the eye, in order to avoid the possibility of its receiving injury from the flame of the singeing-lamp. Far too often grooms are very careless in this respect, and far too often they will, in their endeavour to make what they consider a 'neat job' of it, singe the eyelashes and feelers purposely. The deprivation of the natural shade and protection to the eye of a horse causes untold torture to the wretched animal. For, apart from the discomfort which must be caused it by the glare of the rays of the sun, the annoyance from flies, etc., is very greatly increased. A horse can blow out the flies from his nostrils, but without the lashes and feelers he is at their mercy, and well-nigh maddened at times.

Although cataract is curable in the human subject, there is absolutely no cure for it in the horse. Firstly, because, if not quite impossible, it is at all events very difficult to operate at all on the eye of a horse, by reason of the strength of the muscle of the 'haw' (to which I have made reference above); and secondly, because it is impossible to guard the eye, as would be necessary subsequent to the performance of the operation (if so delicate an operation could be performed successfully), as in the case of a human being. Consequently it may be asserted that the disease is incurable.

CHAPTER IX.

Strangles—Megrims—Staggers—The pulse—Colic—Broken-wind—
 Testing wind of a horse—Worms—Physic—Crib-biting and wind-
 sucking—Jaundice—The kidneys—Sprain of back tendons—
 Swelled legs—Mallenders and sallenders—Curb—Cow-hocks—
 Stringhalt—Capped-hock—Blood spavin and bog spavin—Bone
 spavin—Splint—Ring-bone—Navicular disease—Corns—The frog
 —Thrush—Hints to the blacksmith—Grease—Cracked-heels—
 Sagacity and intelligence of horses—The New York Fire Brigade
 ---Mr. Crocker's educated horses.

STRANGLES is a disease which all young horses are bound to have at some period or other, and this period is, generally speaking, between the age of four and five, and most frequently in the spring. The first indication of the complaint is a cough, which is followed, as is usually the case in a horse with a cough, by a discharge from the nostrils. In strangles this discharge is excessive, of a yellowish colour, mixed with matter, but generally free from any offensive smell. There is also a considerable discharge of a ropy fluid from the mouth, and the glands of the throat become also very much swollen. This swelling increases with variable rapidity, and is accompanied by a certain amount of fever and a general disinclination for food, partly arising from the fever, but chiefly by reason of the pain which is experienced in the act of chewing or swallowing. There is also a great deal of thirst, but

after taking a few gulps the horse ceases to drink, though apparently very desirous of doing so. In the attempts made to swallow, and sometimes when neither eating nor drinking, a convulsive cough comes on which threatens to suffocate the animal.

A tumour is formed in the centre of the channel between the jaws and soon fills up the whole of the space, and this is evidently one uniform body or lump, and by this the complaint may be distinguished from glanders, or the enlarged glandular swellings of an ordinary cold.*

By degrees the lump increases, gets softer, and eventually bursts, and a quantity of pus is discharged from it. As soon as this takes place the cough ceases, and the animal begins to recover, though necessarily remaining much weakened for a time.

There is no preventive for this complaint, and it generally makes its appearance in conjunction with certain atmospheric changes. The treatment required for it is, as a rule, simple enough, but in extreme cases I have known it necessary to insert a breathing-tube in order to prevent a horse being choked.

If it is desired to hasten the formation of the tumour, recourse may be had to some kind of blister, such as 'ossiline,' applied by rubbing. As soon as the swelling comes to a soft head it may be lanced, but the incision made must be large and deep enough, or else the tumour may re-form. The tumour should not be allowed to burst naturally—and I have known cases of horses choking when such has been permitted—neither should pressure with the fingers ever be used, since

* The gland, in the case of glanders, is adhesive to the jaw—at least, that on the near side is generally so.—ED.

such treatment might cause the formation of an ulcer, which would be very difficult to cure.

When the tumour has been opened the parts should be kept clean and some friar's balsam daily injected into the wound. Should any feverish symptoms return, or the chest become affected, it is a wise plan to have the animal bled at once.

If, after an attack of strangles, a horse is more than ordinarily weak, a small quantity of some tonic, such, for instance, as camomile, gentian, and ginger, in doses of a couple of drachms, may be advantageously given. Should it be desired to bring about a milder form of the disease, inoculation with the matter taken from the tumour, or with the discharge from the nostril, may be resorted to.

Megrims is an affection of the brain, caused, it may be presumed, by an overflow of blood, or congestion of blood, in that part of the body. Whether it is induced by over-feeding and want of exercise, or whether it is an inherited complaint, is not certain. Indeed, very much doubt exists as to its cause. Harness-horses are more liable to it than those used for saddle. Strange to say, the attack is apt to occur more frequently (and I here quote from Sir F. Fitzwygram's work on horses) during the intervals of sunshine which sometimes occur on hot cloudy days in summer than at any other time.

The complaint may be very much guarded against in animals which are subject to it by careful diet and physicking. Over-high condition and want of exercise are, and must be, but conducive to the complaint. The pressure of the collar also doubtless has much to do with it, and horses whose heads are badly or

coarsely set on are more liable to it than others ; and this fact alone, therefore, tends to show that it is of the first importance that everything in the way of harness, the collar and headstall especially, should fit very perfectly and easily. The headstall requires special care and attention, for whilst it is requisite that all its several parts should fit easily, it is also necessary that it should fit well and be well fitted on, as otherwise, in the struggling and shaking of the head, peculiar to an attack of this complaint, it may be possibly shaken off.

Staggers is a disease very closely allied to the foregoing, inasmuch as it is an affection of the brain. This complaint may be classified under two heads—viz., what is termed ‘mad staggers,’ and that which is termed ‘sleepy staggers.’ In the former case the disease may arise from several causes, either an overloaded stomach and consequent severe indigestion, from a blow, from sunstroke, or from an abscess on the brain, etc. The first-named cause is, however, that which is the most frequent.

In the second named phase of the disease, sleepy staggers, the cause is most generally indigestion, or rather, I should say, plethora induced by indigestion.

In either case the treatment required is very much the same, and consists in the administration of some strong purgative medicine, which must be repeated if the first dose is not powerful enough to take effect. In extreme cases bleeding may be resorted to ; and if, as may be the case in mad staggers, it is impossible to administer physic, there is no alternative but to bleed. Mad staggers may possibly follow an attack of sleepy staggers, unless the latter can be effectually treated in time to prevent such a contingency occurring.

Should it be necessary to bleed for a sudden attack, some relief may be afforded—if circumstances prevent the operation being done properly at the time—by cutting the bars of the palate with a penknife. The bar which should be so cut is that which is precisely in line between the middle and second incisor teeth, and rather more than an inch inside the mouth, the artery and vein there forming a curve. The cut may be made with a sharp penknife, and a copious flow of blood will result. The bleeding will stop when some three quarts of blood have run, when the artery will shrink of its own accord, having been cut across. Should the bleeding, however, not cease, the application of cold water with a sponge will soon stop it. The vein cut is merely a nerve vein, and no injury can result. Care must, however, be taken not to cut too much on one side, otherwise the artery would be wounded longitudinally, and not divided, in which case great danger might ensue, and considerable difficulty be experienced in arresting the bleeding.

This operation, however, is better performed by a skilled hand, and I have only here described it, inasmuch as circumstances might arise in which the assistance of a veterinary surgeon might not be available.

Every horse-owner should know how to 'take' the pulse of a horse, so as to be able to form an opinion as to whether the animal is suffering from fever or debility. The most convenient place is in the lower jaw, a little way behind where the submaxillary artery and vein and the parotid duct come from under the jaw. In this spot the pulsations are easily counted, and the true character of the pulse obtained. At the side, however, the pulsations can only be counted, and

no more. If it is required to ascertain the strength of the flow of the blood, the artery must be pressed against the jaw bone. The natural, healthy number of beats or pulsations depends very much on the class of horse which is being examined. For instance, a cart-horse in a state of perfect health will average about thirty-six to the minute ; whereas in the smaller and better bred animal, the pulsations will give a record of from forty to forty-two. This is what is termed the 'standard pulse,' and varies but little in horses of the same size. When the pulsations give a return of fifty or fifty-five, it may be concluded that fever is present, which if not checked in time will increase. If the number of pulsations reach a hundred, unless immediately reduced, death must ensue. Careless grooms often cause injury to horses which are in a state of high fever by startling them instead of approaching them quietly.

After the pulse has been taken, and the examiner has been some time by the horse, it is advisable that a second examination should be made, for it is impossible to tell whether the presence of a new-comer may have made the horse nervous, and thereby unduly increased the action of the heart ; but, as a rule, the horse, if so startled, soon quiets down, and enables a correct conclusion to be formed. When the pulse is hard and jerky the fever is at its height, and this is also generally indicative that the fever proceeds from inflammation of the bowels, in which case the services of a veterinary surgeon should be speedily requisitioned. For all ordinary purposes the foregoing will be found sufficient ; but there are so many varieties of pulse that it would be impossible to enter into detail

respecting them in such a work as the present—and, indeed, such belong rather to the professional man than to the amateur.

Colic may be explained as being spasm of the internal abdominal muscles—*i.e.*, the muscles of the coats of the stomach. It is important that the difference between colic and inflammation should be distinguished, the one being, as I have said, spasm, and the other being what its name implies. An attack of colic is usually very sudden, and there is but little warning. The animal shifts about uneasily, looks constantly round to his flanks, paws the ground violently, and strikes his belly with his feet, and lies down and rolls on his back. In a few minutes the pain probably ceases; he rises again and commences to feed, and then, the pain recurring, down he goes again, the symptoms increasing, till the poor creature positively sweats with the agony, which increases at each attack.

The complaint is generally caused by immoderate or injudicious feeding or watering, or a chill, such as that which may easily be contracted if kept outside a stable while being washed after a hard day's work, etc. Some animals are very subject to it. Fortunately, nowadays the complaint is well understood and is easily curable.

Injections of warm soap and water, or mixed with a little turpentine, may be given, accompanied by hand-rubbing of the belly and legs, and bandaging of the latter, and the use of plenty of warm rugs. The latter should, if they get wet from perspiration, be changed for dry from time to time.

Linseed-oil and sulphuric or nitric ether in the pro-

portion of a pint of the former to an ounce of the latter may be given, and if nothing better is at hand, whisky or hot ale may be substituted. An ounce of tincture of opium to an ounce and a half of nitric ether is also an excellent remedy. Nothing is more likely to cause colic than green forage given too unsparingly (and, I may add, feeding with corn just before watering.—ED.).

Colic is, as I have said, a complaint which comes on suddenly, whereas inflammation is more gradual in its approach. Until a horse has quite recovered from the attack and its effects, no corn or hay should be allowed. Bran mashes only should be given, and it should be very gradually brought on to its general feeding again.

The difference between broken wind and what is termed 'thick wind' is very easily detected, as in the latter both inhalation and exhalation, though rapid and laboured, are equally so, and occupy the same time, whereas in the former the inhalation is performed by one effort and the exhalation by two. The effort is very apparent in the double action of the flanks. Broken wind is also generally accompanied by a dry, sharp, peculiar-sounding cough. It is generally caused by injudicious feeding and watering, and it may also be said to be hereditary. Farmers' horses are very apt to become broken-winded, by reason of the indigestible nature of the food which is often given them. They are also frequently kept fasting for many hours, and are then allowed to gorge themselves, and probably immediately afterwards again put to work. It not unfrequently happens that hunters turned out to grass come up broken-winded.

There appears to be no permanent cure for the

disease, though it may, by care in feeding and watering, be very much relieved.*

In testing a horse for his wind he should be galloped only. Squeezing the throat to make him cough is a barbarous custom which can do no good, but may be conducive to harm.

In some horses worms always exist in a greater or less degree. Unless they do so in large numbers they are not injurious. Their presence is indicated in the latter case by the skin being what is termed 'hide-bound,' and it has also a rusty appearance.

There is frequently a cough, or they may cause gripes, and I have known a case in which megrims have been produced by them. A dose of aloes, followed by a dose of calomel, will be found efficacious; but I may as well remark that calomel cannot be administered to a horse as freely as to a human being. I have cured several horses by injecting linseed-oil. The worms which cause the greatest trouble, and which are the most difficult to eradicate, are the 'bots,' which are the larvæ of the gadfly.

A horse requires very careful preparation for work. In the first instance, he must be fed on bran mashes and chaff, in order to bring him into a condition fit for physic, when the usual five-drachm ball of aloes may be given. Very little hay and bran mashes may be allowed him, and walking exercise will help the physic to act; but so soon as the latter commences he must be left alone in the stable. If he can be induced to drink it, warm water must be given to drink; but where the animal cannot be induced to drink warm, a very

* I may as well remark that broken wind is a totally different complaint from either roaring or whistling.—ED.

little cold (about a quart at a time) may be allowed, and not more frequently than once an hour. When the purging has ceased a bran mash, twice daily, may be given until the administration of the next dose, which should not follow the first sooner than a week. Barbadoes aloes is the best for the purpose, and is that which is most generally used, seven drachms being the utmost amount which should be given to the largest cart-horse. The aloes given in solution acts better than when given as a ball. If good Barbadoes aloes is unobtainable, croton-oil may be used, but the quantity used should never exceed half a drachm ; indeed, one scruple is often sufficient.

The administration of physic without the horse being duly prepared to receive it, by being previously dieted as above directed, may produce colic, and if physicking is not preceded by proper preparation, its effect is very much nullified.

Wind-sucking and crib-biting, although they may be termed first cousins, are not one and the same thing, albeit the latter generally leads to the former. Both are caused by a disordered state of the stomach and idleness, and both, if not actually curable, are at least preventible to a very great extent. In order the better to prevent the habit the cause may be lessened by care and attention being paid to the diet of the animal and the periodical administration of mild doses of physic ; added to which I may also advise plenty of work—want of exercise and undue feeding being very often the primary causes. From the stomach being disordered and want of work combined, the horse begins playing with his manger or any wooden projection which may be handy for the purpose, and after

a time he learns not only to 'crib,' as such biting of the woodwork is termed, but also to inhale wind during the action of cribbing. When once the habit is formed, a horse will somehow or other manage to continue it unless means are taken to prevent his so doing. It is a good plan, therefore, with such animals to remove all manger-fittings, etc., and to feed them on the ground; and when not feeding a crib-biting-strap should be worn—an ordinary leather strap with a knot in it—buckled round the throat, and so placed that the knot presses on the windpipe, or a wooden ball run on the strap will answer the purpose, though hardly so effectually or safely as the regular strap, which is made and sold for the purpose.

In wind-sucking the horse inhales and swallows the air which is inhaled, and distends his stomach to a considerable extent.

Both wind-sucking and crib-biting are considered unsoundness in a horse, and rightly so, for if in their earlier stages a horse is practically sound, still, nevertheless, sooner or later the wind becomes affected so seriously as to very much interfere with his capabilities for hard or fast work. Moreover, the habit, as also the preventive measures which are necessary, are both conducive to cause such animals to become whistlers and subsequently roarers, even if no worse results ensue. It is also next door to impossible in the more advanced stages of the disease, as it may be termed, to maintain such animals in good condition. Nor does the habit decrease with age: it has the contrary tendency. In some instances horses learn to suck wind just as easily without seizing anything with their teeth as with. Such cases are well-nigh hopeless; and,

despite a very great deal which has been written on the subject of wind-sucking and crib-biting, I should strongly recommend any owner of a horse which is far advanced in the habit to get rid of him to the highest bidder.

Jaundice, or as it is sometimes termed, 'the yellows,' and by the majority of grooms and such like 'jaunders,' arises from a disordered state of the liver. It may be that the latter is sluggish, congested, or inflamed. Either of these conditions may be produced by undue feeding, want of sufficient work, or chill. The complaint is easily curable in its milder forms; but, if the result of inflammation, more stringent remedies are requisite, and the services of a veterinary surgeon are necessary. In the case of sluggishness or congestion of the liver—the latter, it may be observed, frequently following on the former—proper diet and exercise will, accompanied by suitable medicine, generally serve to effect a cure. For sluggishness, half a drachm of calomel, with a small quantity of ginger, given daily for three or four days, and for congestion a dose of thirty grains of calomel and two drachms of extract of gentian daily, are recommended. The use of mustard, rubbed in externally over the seat of the liver, is also said to produce good results in reducing the congestion. If weakness ensues tonics must be administered. Two drachms of camomile, two of gentian, and one of ginger, form a good tonic ball. I may as well remark that jaundice is a complaint which, unless it is the result of some other ailment, should not occur in any stable in which the management is what it ought to be.

Fortunately for the horse-owner, the kidneys of a

horse are very easily acted upon by medicine, though it may be also observed that they are very easily disordered. Bad hay, bad oats, chill, and sprain, may be reckoned as being the most frequent causes of inflammation of the kidneys. The symptoms are feverishness, restlessness, and undue perspiration. The animal stands with his belly 'tucked up,' and his legs wide apart, and is unable to turn in his stall without experiencing pain, and winces if the kidneys are pressed. The bowels are also constipated. The best treatment recommended is the application of flannel cloths steeped in hot water, the administration of a scruple of calomel to a pint of oil, followed, after the purging has ceased, by a dose of half a drachm of calomel and a drachm of opium every morning and evening for some three or four consecutive days. Plenty of hand-rubbing, and the application of some ammoniacal embrocation, mixed with oil and tincture of opium in the following proportion, may be used with advantage, viz., oil, 6 ounces; water of ammonia, 1 ounce; tincture of opium, 2 ounces. Linseed-tea is also good as a drink, and grass and carrots may be given as being beneficial. The following treatment is also recommended, viz., turpentine, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce; ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ drachm, made into a ball with linseed-meal, or resin may be substituted for the turpentine and the whole formed into a mass with palm-oil. In cases of inflammation, nitre, digitalis, the spirit of nitrous ether, cream of tartar, and balsam of capivi, are all said to be efficacious.

The tendons are enclosed in a sheath of dense cellular substance, in order to confine them in their situation, as also to protect them from injury. Between

the tendon and its sheath there is a mucous fluid, which serves to prevent friction ; but when a horse has been overworked, or subjected to any sudden and violent effort in leaping, or galloping, etc., the tendon may, pressing unduly on the delicate lining of the sheath, cause inflammation to be set up ; this latter condition causes the formation of a different fluid, which, coagulating, causes adhesion between the tendon and the sheath, and thereby causes pain when the limb is moved. It may happen that the fibres which serve to tie the tendon down become ruptured. A slight injury of this description is termed 'strain of the back sinews or tendons.' When the injury is more than this the horse is said to have 'broken down.' It may be as well at once explained that, since the tendon is inelastic and incapable of extension, it cannot be sprained, and even in what is termed a 'break-down,' it is very rarely the case that either the tendon or its sheath is ruptured. The injury is generally confined to inflammation of the sheath, or rupture of some of the attaching fibres ; but the inflammation of the part causes great pain, and consequently considerable lameness. If the inflammation is excessive I strongly recommend that the horse should be bled at the toe. It is an old-fashioned remedy, but by far the best and quickest. The operation is thus performed : the sole of the foot having been well trimmed, a groove must be cut with the rounded head of a small drawing-knife at the junction of the sole and crust. This will open the large vein at the toe ; or the groove may be widened in a backward direction until the vein is reached. When blood appears the vein may be more fully opened by means of a small

lancet thrust horizontally under the sole, and almost any quantity of blood may thus be easily procured. If it is desired to increase the bleeding the foot may be immersed in a bucket of warm water. When a sufficient quantity of blood has been drawn a piece of tow may be placed in the groove and the shoe tacked on. The bleeding will thus be at once stopped and the wound will heal. The leg should be well fomented with warm water for half-an-hour at a time some two or three times daily. Between the fomentations the leg should be enclosed in a linseed poultice, and some extract—such as Goulard's, Farrell's, or Collins'—may be also added to the fomentations. Moisture and warmth are the chief aids to cure. No stimulants of any kind must be used. A thin elastic flannel bandage, previously soaked in vinegar and spirits of wine, should then be placed over the swollen part. This bandage should be tightened each day as the swelling becomes gradually reduced. The proportion of vinegar and spirits of wine used is a pint of the former to half-a-pint of the latter. If with the above treatment a relapse occurs, it will be due to the horse being worked too soon. If it is found that the remedy here given is insufficient to reduce the swelling, and that the latter continues in spite of it, 'ossiline' blister, which will leave no mark, should be at once applied. In extreme cases still severer remedies are necessary and firing may have to be resorted to. If the 'ossiline' fails to do its work, and the skin becomes thickened, or the swelling callous, there is nothing for it but to fire the leg. A few weeks' rest is sufficient if the 'ossiline' only is used, but where it is a case of firing, at least six months must be allowed. Nor, if any blister is used

after firing, should such ever be applied before the expiration of this period.

Swelled legs are frequently caused by the inflammation in one part of the body shifting its position to the limbs. Occasionally the hind legs will swell to an enormous size, from the hock, and almost from the stifle-joint at times, down to the fetlock. The swelling is accompanied by fever and heat, extreme tenderness of the skin, and great lameness. The pulse becomes fast and hard. This condition denotes fever or inflammation of the cellular substance of the legs; it is most violent in its degree, and therefore attended by the pouring out of a great deal of fluid matter in this cellular substance. Fomentations, diuretics, or physic will frequently relieve the distension, which will subside almost as suddenly as it appeared.

Swelled legs often proceed from want of proper exercise. Horses which are taken up from grass and too suddenly put on hard food are frequently liable to swelled legs, and horses generally are more liable to thus suffer during the spring and fall of the year.

Mallenders and sallenders are but very old-fashioned terms for a scurfy eruption, which is the result of bad feeding, want of proper grooming, etc., and it is somewhat difficult to get rid of. The term 'mallenders' refers to the eruption when it is in the fore-leg, 'sallenders' when in the hind. It appears under the knees and hocks.

If taken in time, a diuretic ball will generally go far towards effecting a cure, and this may be followed by the application of an ointment made of the following—viz., sugar-of-lead, 1 part; Stockholm tar, 2 parts; lard, 6 parts. The above should be well rubbed in.

If neglected, the eruption will cause permanent disfigurement.

Curb is an enlargement of the back of the hock, about three inches below what is termed the 'point of hock,' and is generally caused by strain of the ring-like ligament which serves to bind the tendons down in their places. It may be caused by any sudden check, and it goes on from bad to worse, until it becomes apparent and causes lameness. Some horses inherit curby hocks, but bad treatment in riding or driving may very easily produce it in any young horse. I can most conscientiously recommend the use of 'ossiline' as a cure for it; and, indeed, it is a remedy which I have found most invaluable for many ailments, including spavin, side-bone, and ring-bone, etc., if it is but used in time.

In severe cases of curb, firing must be resorted to. It is quite possible for a horse to have curb and yet not to be lamed by it—at all events, in its primary stage.

What are termed 'cow-hocks' are a malformation—so called by reason of the hocks being similar in shape to those of a cow. I cannot advise anyone to purchase a horse so formed, for although he may possess the power of galloping, still, nevertheless, such a formation is indicative of weakness, and such hocks are even more liable to curbs, spavins, thoroughpins, etc.

String-halt is a catching up of the leg, generally the hind-leg. It is a nervous affection, for which there is no cure. It hardly constitutes lameness, and wears off as the horse gets warm with exercise.

Capped hock is an enlargement of the mucous sacs which surround the insertion of the tendons into the

hock. It seldom causes lameness, but is a very serious blemish. It is generally caused by a blow; most frequently it is caused by a horse kicking in the stall or in harness. In the former case it is a somewhat difficult matter to cure a horse of the habit. Perhaps the best remedy is to put an animal which is addicted to kicking in a stall into a loose-box, in which there is nothing for him to kick at which can damage his hocks. Sweating-bandages will help to reduce it, unless the hock is very much enlarged, and hand-rubbing will also be found efficacious.

Although the coatings of the veins of a horse are, compared with those of the arteries, somewhat thin, the veins are, nevertheless, not subject to become varicose. A horse's legs may display the results of hard work in a variety of ways, but, with one exception, the veins themselves will be unaltered in structure. There is attached to the extremity of nearly every tendon a small bag containing a mucous substance, which enables the tendons to work without causing friction on the surrounding parts. Violent exercise causes these little bags or sacs to become enlarged, as, for instance, in the case of windgalls, thoroughpins, etc. One such receptacle is situated on the inside of the hock, at its bend. This at times is liable to become very much enlarged by strain, over-work, etc., and forms what is called a 'bog' spavin. Passing over this bag or sac there is a vein. The enlargement of the mucous sac pressing upon this vein impedes the flow of the blood through it. The vein naturally becomes distended, and what is termed a 'blood' spavin is thus formed. It will be thus seen that the latter is a consequence of the former. If, therefore,

the bog spavin is treated in time, the formation of blood spavin is prevented. There is no actual cure for either bog or blood spavin, but, as may be supposed, any treatment which may serve to reduce the former must of necessity benefit the latter. It by no means follows that either one or the other produces lameness. Rest, friction, pressure by means of bandaging, and sweating-bandages, combined with due regard to the horse being kept in proper condition, and not over-fed, are the best remedies.

Bone spavin is an affection of the bones of the joint of the hock.

What is termed the 'shank,' or 'cannon' bone, and the two little bones behind it, serve to support the lower layer of the bones of the hock. The cuboid bone rests on the shank-bone, and in a slight degree on the outer splint-bone. Thus a very great proportion of the weight and concussion is thrown on the splint-bones. Not only is the inner of the two splint-bones placed more directly under the body, and nearer, therefore, to the centre of gravity, but nearly the whole of the weight and concussion communicated to the small, wedge-like bone it sustains are therefore laid on it. In jumping or heavy draught-work it is not to be wondered at that in young horses, especially before their hocks have become properly knit, the inner splint-bone or else its ligaments, or the substance which connects it with the shank-bone, should at times suffer severe injury. Injudicious shoeing is also a frequent cause of spavin. For if the outer heel is raised too high from the ground, the unequal distribution of the weight must be injurious, and cause an undue strain on the ligaments, particularly those of

the hock joint. The weight thus thrown on the inner splint-bone produces inflammation of the cartilaginous substance which unites it to the shank-bone; the result of which is absorption of the cartilage and a deposit of bone or bony substance, and the union, instead of being cartilaginous and elastic, becomes hard and unyielding. If this state of things is permitted to exist without proper treatment being resorted to, the evil, increasing, implicates the head of the splint-bone at its junction with the shank-bone, and bone spavin is produced. Indeed, inflammation of the ligaments of any of the numerous small bones of the hock serves to produce bone spavin. During its formation spavin generally causes lameness, but by degrees as the periosteum accommodates itself to the distension to which it is subjected by the enlargement, the lameness, provided it does not interfere with the action of the joint, will cease.

At times horses may be seen with very large spavins, which do not, save when first starting, affect their going, or cause more than a temporary stiffness. Yet a greater number of horses are lame by reason of a spavin, which may be so insignificant in appearance as to take some close observation to detect, the spavin in this latter case being in such a position as to interfere with the proper action of the joint.

The bones of the hock joint are so numerous that it is inadvisable for me to enter more fully on the subject as far as they are concerned. Suffice it to say that any of them may become implicated, and lameness in a greater or less degree will result, according as the deposit formed affects the action more or less. I can but advise any horse-owner who may be interested in

the subject, and who is desirous of becoming more fully acquainted with the formation of the hock, to take the first opportunity afforded him of studying the several bones by the aid of some good anatomical specimen. Such knowledge will prove valuable to him, and very materially assist him in his judgment of horses which may be either spavined or show signs of becoming so.

In the earlier stages of the disease blistering will generally effect a cure, always provided that a sufficient period of rest is subsequently allowed. Later on, however, it becomes necessary to have recourse to firing, nor is that operation invariably successful as a cure.

There are cases of spavin which are not easily detected, being invisible; and such cases may be reckoned as being the worst, inasmuch as, being deep-seated, they are the more difficult to treat.

Spavined horses are incapable of doing fast or severe work in saddle, but use may be made of them for light harness-work or for agricultural purposes.

Splint is caused by concussion, which induces inflammation, and in like manner, as is the case in spavin, causes the formation of bony deposit. While spavin is a disease which occurs in the hind leg, splint almost invariably confines itself to the bones of the fore, and, like spavin, during its formation causes lameness; though such lameness is by no means necessarily permanent, being often due to the undue distension of the periosteum, or the membrane which covers the bone. Where, however, any implication of the splint bones occurs, or where the splint is so placed as to interfere with the action of the bone, it becomes

a serious evil, and its removal by blistering, or even at times firing, becomes necessary. Rest, cooling applications, and laxative diet will in most cases effect a cure, provided the treatment is administered in time. Young horses, more especially those which are under-bred, are more subject to contract splints when put to work which is too severe for them, particularly road-work.

Where splints do not interfere with the other bones or the action of the horse, if fully formed and hardened, they are only an eyesore, and are better left alone.

Ring-bone is also similar in its character to splint, but more serious. Like splint, it is due to concussion, and is a formation of bony matter at the coronet. The same treatment may be used as for splint. In severe cases, however, the lameness, if not cured in its earlier stages, renders the horse unfit for any work save ploughing and such-like labour.

Navicular disease is a disease of the navicular bone, and of all such diseases that which may be most dreaded, inasmuch as it is absolutely incurable. The bone itself becomes ulcerated, and caries ensues. It is possible by an operation termed 'unnerving' to remove all sensation of pain; indeed, all sensation of any kind is thus removed from the foot. Its presence is indicated by the very varying and unequal temperature of the feet, and also by the horse invariably pointing his leg forward when standing at rest in the stable. As may be inferred, it is steadily progressive, and sooner or later there is nothing for it but to destroy the animal. Horses unnerved may last and work for several years, but for hunting purposes can hardly be considered safe, especially in a bank country. The best

advice which I can offer to the owner of a horse so afflicted is to part with it, or, if the case is a far advanced one, to have the horse destroyed.

Corns in a horse are the result of bruise. In the human foot they are, as is perhaps too well known, the result of pressure. But in both instances badly fitting and short shoes are to blame. In the horse the shoe, being too short, bears unduly upon what is called the seat of corn—viz., the inner portion of the sole where the fibres of the crust, doubling back, form, with the sole, what are termed the ‘bars.’ The shoe should, of course, be continued the entire length of the foot, but when it falls short of this fitting the end of it is, by the weight and action of the horse, driven into the foot at this spot, and forms a bruise.

Unless this evil is promptly remedied, the bruise extends deeper, and in extreme cases the matter which is formed by the inflammation thus set up, being unable to force its way through the horn, creates a sinus in an upward direction, and eventually finding exit at the coronet, produces what is termed a ‘quittor,’ which is a very difficult and troublesome complaint to cure.

Corns are entirely due to bad shoeing, and are a disgrace to both the owner and the farrier—to the latter because he has so shod the horse as to produce them; to the former, inasmuch as such shoes being permitted to remain on any horse in his possession long enough to cause such a state of affairs evinces a very careless and bad system of stable management generally.

Horses which are lame from corns, generally speaking, ‘warm up’ and go sound after they have gone some distance in saddle or harness, as the case may be;

but when again cool and left standing the wretched animal plainly indicates the pain he is suffering by raising the heel of his foot off the ground. Moreover, if there is any doubt as to the cause of lameness, if such results from corns, the inner side of the foot will be considerably higher in temperature than the outer. Unless it is an extreme case and a sinus has begun to form, corns are very easily curable. The first thing to be done is of course to remove the cause—*i.e.*, the shoe. The seat of corn must then be pared down to the quick with a small and sharp drawing-knife, and, if necessary, the operation must extend even deeper, so as to allow the exit of any matter which may have formed. In ordinary cases it is sufficient to cut close to the quick only, but the operation should be gently and carefully performed, and the knife should be as sharp as it can be. This having been done, a poultice of linseed-meal, bran, or turnip should be applied for some two or three days. The part may then be dressed with bluestone or butter of antimony, and a properly-fitting shoe tacked on. Unless the horse is absolutely obliged to be used, a three-quarter shoe will be the best, since there can then be no pressure on the corn ; but such shoes are never satisfactory for working a horse in, and, if possible, rest, until the horn has sufficiently grown to admit of the horse being put to work again, is by far the best and quickest remedy in the end.

It is needless to remark that the inflammation caused by corns does the foot, generally speaking, no good, and tends to the production of contracted feet. Some horses are more liable to corns than others, especially those with short, stumpy, inelastic pasterns. Again,

those horses whose feet have become contracted are more liable to corns, and perhaps the rather that they require greater care in shoeing, and thus the complaint and its cause act and react upon each other. So common are corns in horses, owing to the ignorance of farriers and that of horse-owners as a rule, that I may venture to assert that if the feet of the first twenty horses met with at any time in the streets of London or any large town were inspected, at least half of them would be found to be suffering more or less from them. Cart-horses must suffer very much from corns, inasmuch as their feet are as a rule very insufficiently cared for, and their shoes everything they should *not* be. If poor horses could but speak, how bitterly they would curse the man who, instead of being their true friend, is their greatest foe—I mean the farrier!

If the sole of the foot of a horse is inspected, it will be observed that there is a V-shaped growth of horn, which extends from the heels to some three parts of the distance between them and the toe. This is termed the frog. Of course, it is placed in the foot of a horse for some wise purpose, and this is evidently to prevent the horse from slipping. Nor could anything be more admirably designed for the fulfilment of this duty. It also is doubtless intended to sustain some portion of the weight of the animal in the unshod foot. Since such is the case, it behoves us to preserve it healthy. This it cannot be if it is to be unduly pared away by the farrier. To be healthy it must be *used*, and the more it is so, the truer and more rapid will be the growth of the horn of which it is composed. In shoeing, therefore, the frog should not be cut down too much, but any ragged portions which there may

be on it should alone be trimmed off with the drawing-knife. The level of the frog should be slightly below that of the shoe. In no case should the frog protrude beyond the surface of the shoe, but it should be left at such a level that in soft ground it prevents the horse from slipping, and in all cases is subject to a proper amount of wear and tear. If this particular is closely attended to, the chances are that the remaining portions of the foot will also be healthy. If a frog is too much cut away, and consequently fails to sustain a proper amount of wear, it will become shrivelled and useless, and the foot also will become unhealthy.

Thrush is a disease of the frog caused by horses being allowed to stand in dirty, ill-kept stables, and from neglect in keeping their feet clean of dung, etc. The disease is very apparent, for it is accompanied by the most offensive smell. In aggravated cases a discharge exudes from the cleft of the frog. In extreme cases what is termed 'canker' may ensue.

No horse in a gentleman's stable should ever suffer from such a disease, and it is a disgrace to all concerned, especially to the groom. Like corns, however, it is far too common. Where the bedding is changed frequently, the stalls kept scrupulously clean, and the horses' feet constantly picked out, thrush can never occur. More thrush is contracted during the idle hours of Sunday than in the remaining six days of the week, by reason of the grooms leaving the horses to stand for so many hours in their dung.

Fortunately it is a disease as easily cured as prevented. Dryness, pressure, and the use of strong astringents will rapidly effect a cure. Of course it must be understood that good shoeing is also a *sine*

quâ non, either as regards the prevention or the cure of the disease. Bedding on sawdust has for the time a beneficial effect, and a mixture of bluestone and Stockholm tar will serve as an efficient astringent.

The farrier should bear in mind that whatever shape a horse's foot may be naturally, he must endeavour, as nearly as possible, to preserve the same bearing in the foot when shod. Nothing further than the month's growth of horn should be removed, and this removal should be effected by means of the rasp. The sole should not be pared out, and the ragged and exfoliated portions of it alone interfered with. The heels should be left alone as Nature made them, and not chopped out; and the shoe should be made to fit the foot, and not, as is so generally the case, the foot the shoe. No rasp should ever be allowed outside the foot above where the nails are clenched under any circumstances whatever. The shoe should follow the line of the crust exactly, and be no wider in the web than is absolutely necessary; and while amply long so as to prevent corns, it should not be too long. The edge of the shoe and outer edge of the crust should be level, and the level should be the result of a shoe which fits accurately, and not brought about by the use of the rasp on the edge of the crust. No shoe should ever be fitted on hot. If a farrier will but bear in mind these rules, and carry them out, he will rarely suffer reproach from either the owner of a horse or from himself.

Grease is not a complaint which is, as a rule, met with in a gentleman's stable; suffice it to say that it is caused chiefly by dirt, wet, and injudicious feeding. It is but very rarely that horses which are well

bred suffer from it, and it is chiefly confined to underbred, low-classed animals; though there are exceptions to the rule, and there are also horses which are naturally predisposed to it. Physic, the use of ointment (a drachm of sugar of lead to an ounce of lard), and in extreme cases poulticing, will generally in the end effect a cure—of course always provided that the stable management is properly carried out.

Cracked heels are no more than chapped heels, caused by the heels not being properly dried after being washed, or when the horse has come in sweating. The ointment prescribed above for grease will be found as good as anything. Horses which are at all predisposed to grease are, perhaps, more inclined to cracked heels than others, and I may also remark that white heels are generally those which are the more liable to become cracked.

The foregoing comprises, I think, a list of such ailments, their cause and cure, as may be ordinarily met with by the average horse-owner. It is, of course, impossible, in such a work as the present, to go fully into the subject of ailments. Nevertheless, the short reference which I have made to those which I have dealt with may prove of use, even though the subject itself may not contain much that is of interest.

I have in the foregoing pages of this work made frequent reference to the sagacity and intelligence possessed by horses, and I am convinced that with trouble and kindness their powers in this respect may be very fully matured. To those who may be sceptical on the subject, I most strongly advise their taking the opportunity, if such may offer, of visiting the Fire

Department in New York. Its management is certainly the most perfect in the whole world, and is under the supervision of Mr. Purroy.

To instance the rapidity with which the engines are horsed, I will narrate the following experience of a friend of mine, Mr. Walter R. Johnston, now living in New York, and Mr. Purroy's head electrician in the explosive department. On his first becoming acquainted with Mr. Purroy, the latter offered to bet my friend that if he would turn up any night he would engage to have the men out of bed, the engines horsed, and all ready to start in three seconds from the time the electric alarums were sounded in the dormitory and stable. Mr. Johnston not only thought the assertion a Yankee boast, but laid ten to one in dollars against such an apparent impossibility.

One night he decided to put Mr. Purroy to the test, and accordingly arrived at the Fire Department headquarters with several of his friends. The men were all in bed, and the horses were ready harnessed in their stalls, as is usual every night. After retiring for awhile, in order to allow the men to go to sleep, and to be certain that Mr. Purroy had given no hint whatever to them, the alarm was sounded, and sure enough, in less than three seconds the men were out of bed, had pulled on their long boots, and jumped on the engine. The horses were so well trained that the instant the bell sounded they left the stable and backed into the engine, when the traces were fastened, and everything was ready to start in the prescribed time of three seconds. My friend and his companions timed the performance with stop-watches, and did all they could to make it four seconds; but there was no gain-

saying the fact that the stipulated time had been adhered to.

The horses used by the department were very carefully selected out of a considerable number before those possessing the necessary intelligence could be secured, and then they were trained by being fed with apples, etc., and made thoroughly to understand what was expected of them.

As the engine moved off, another engine came up from under it and took its place, when, if necessary, an alarm bell was sounded close to the heads of the team of horses which were next for duty, and so on until the full complement of engines required for service at a large fire were started in the most incredibly short time. Everything appeared to be worked by electricity, and when the weight of one engine was taken off the lift, another at once made its appearance from below.

I think that the head of our own fire brigade in London would do well to visit the New York establishment and get a few hints from Mr. Purroy, who, when he visited Europe some few years ago, was made so much of in France and Germany ; and, if I may be allowed to make the remark, I think that some considerable benefit to our own style of management might accrue from such a visit, for, judging from what I heard, Mr. Purroy considered that out of the three principal cities in Europe, the Fire Department in London was the worst managed.

From the foregoing it will be seen that horses can be taught to think and act for themselves, just as easily as dogs can be so trained. In the performance I have described, each horse was trained to know his own part,

and to be ready to enact it at the right moment ; and they did so in a manner which would put many of our volunteers or militia to shame.

Anyone who has ever seen the educated horses belonging to Mr. Crocker, U.S.A., can hardly fail to have been surprised at what a pitch of intelligence horses can display. Twelve fine horses fall into line without bit or bridle, Mr. Crocker standing in front of them holding his coat and hat. The first horse, which is called Turk by name, is asked to take away the hat and coat and bring in a chair, and also to wipe out the figures on a blackboard, all of which he does without the slightest hesitation. He is then examined in arithmetic, and his power of calculation is put to the test. He is told to multiply 2 by 3, 2 by 5, 3 by 5, and 3 by 8, and also to give his age. He gives the correct answers by beating the ground with his fore-foot the number of times required. He is then told to fall in again, and he at once takes his place in the ranks, arching his neck and looking quite proud of himself.

The next horse called is Victor. His hearing and understanding sentences which are put to him are tested. He thoroughly understands the meaning of 'Turn to the right' or 'Turn to the left,' etc.

Then Hugo, another fine animal, comes forward, and his ideas of colour are exhibited. Three handkerchiefs—one red, one white, and one blue—are produced. One is stowed away in a desk, a second is hung on a rope, and a third is retained, and the audience are requested to select one of the three colours. On the blue being mentioned on one occasion, the horse went straight to the desk and took out the blue handkerchief.

The audience tried their utmost to puzzle him, but he made no mistake, and each time brought the right colour.

The whole performance was deeply interesting ; and it was marvellous to see the talent displayed, not only by the horses themselves in being so apt to learn, but in the power to teach them exhibited by their owner.

PART II.—SHOOTING.



CHAPTER I.

Shooting for sport *v.* shooting for slaughter—Shooting over dogs *v.* driven game—Driven birds—Instruction to beginners—Choice of a gunmaker—Notable gunmakers—Gun practice—Aiming practice for angle-shooting—How to hold a gun—How to overcome the fear of recoil—Practice at swinging-bird—Pigeon-shooting destructive to good field-shooting—Rocketing birds—Practice at wild pigeons—Neck-shine—Shooting at deer—Stags travelling after being shot through the heart—Practice for rocketing birds with clay pigeons, etc.—Ordinary shooting—Evil of shooting too quickly—Position when shooting at driven birds—The theory of shooting—Necessity of firing ahead of birds—Practice *v.* theory—Nervousness : its causes and cure.

WHERE shooting is carried out in an honest, straightforward manner, it may be well assigned a worthy position in our list of British sports. But where slaughter is the primary object, its right to be considered as a sport at all ceases. The former may be termed genuine sport, and the latter, like pigeon-shooting from traps, etc., illegitimate, and therefore inadmissible.

As an old sportsman of many years' standing, I must confess that I never could, and never shall, see where the pleasure or sport exists in the making of

monster bags, and the far too common practice which is nowadays rife, of striving to head the record, when such entails the taking of such an amount of life as must of necessity be sacrificed on such occasions. There is a vast deal of difference between a sportsman and a butcher. A butcher may be a sportsman, despite his trade, but a sportsman can never be a butcher.

The very term 'sport,' as we understand it to mean, implies the science of finding and killing game by fair means. If it is to be a one-sided arrangement, there can be no sport, for both game and sportsmen must be on an equal footing with each other ; and such can hardly be the case when nets and such-like abominations are used. It might be just as reasonably expected to secure sport by hunting a tom-cat in a kitchen with a pack of hounds.

Now, game may be killed legitimately in two ways : either by driving, or over dogs. Doubtless the system of driving, if abused, leads to what may be termed slaughter ; but driving, properly carried out, is, I consider, quite as sporting a mode of shooting as the latter and more old-fashioned custom of shooting over dogs. After several years' experience, I have come to the above conclusion ; and I consider that an equal test of knowledge, nerve, temper, and skill is afforded, and the difficulties presented, such as calculation of distance, pace, angle, force of wind, bad light, etc., are quite as numerous as those encountered by the other method. Indeed, I may assert that, whether at the end or the beginning of the season, if birds will lie to dogs long enough to allow even an average shot to get within reasonable distance, each one fired at

should be accounted for. It is an easy matter to make a fair shooting average over dogs, whereas it is at times an excessively difficult matter to make an average at all at driven birds, as, for instance, where the lie of the ground, bad light, the inequalities offered by hillocks, an unfavourable position, all combine to increase the difficulty of doing effectual work amongst the approaching packs. Indeed, as regards the science of the shooting, no one who has had any experience of driven grouse, and the grand sport which can be shown in a well-organized drive, can equally compare the two methods. Shooting over dogs is doubtless a very grand sport, inasmuch as the intelligence of the dogs is brought into play in conjunction with that of the man ; but the skill demanded of the latter is vastly inferior in the one sport to that of the other. Suffice it, however, to say that both descriptions of shooting are capable of affording a maximum of sport in their different ways.

I have often been very much surprised when reading the objections advanced against driving which have from time to time appeared in the various sporting papers, at the statements made by different correspondents, and have only been able to conclude that few, if any, of them could ever have taken part in a well-organized drive ; and I do not consider that any man who has not had long and varied experience should presume to instruct others in the art of shooting driven birds, whether grouse or pheasants, no matter how well he might be qualified to instruct a novice in the matter of shooting from over dogs in August or pigeons out of traps. None but a veteran at the sport is qualified to offer advice on such a subject, and

even he cannot afford very much assistance in many instances.

When a bad habit has been acquired, it is very difficult to correct it. It would be a presumption on my part to offer more instruction in the art of shooting than to make mention of the well-known rules which are practised by all average and crack shots; at the same time, however, it must be borne in mind that even amongst the very best shots no two men shoot by exactly the same rule; and this goes very far to prove that men who have learned to shoot by practice cannot give practical instruction as to the rules they adopt. Thus it happens at times that a man may make an extra quick shot when he has not even had time to bring his gun to the shoulder. I myself often have, and often do, shoot without shouldering my gun or even looking at it; but, by keeping my eye on the bird, I seem to be instinctively able to calculate its pace and the swing of the gun necessary, hand and eye working in unison. A practical shot at a wind-driven grouse, so to speak, sees, determines, and acts instantly; in other words, judgment, hand, and eye all work together. I may therefore well ask how the ability to so judge and act is to be learned by theory alone. I trust, however, that I may succeed in initiating the beginner by giving him, as a preliminary lesson, a few practical hints, though it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule for everyone, inasmuch as natural formation, sight, and nerve vary very considerably in different individuals. Some men, with but comparatively little practice, shoot well, taking to it naturally; some can attain perfection with the aid of a little tuition and practice, and others require the

most careful training, coupled with long practice, before they can learn to shoot fairly; then, again, there are some men who, failing to be crack shots, require to be tested in every conceivable way before the reason of their failure is discovered, or who, having acquired some bad habit, require a long system of correction before it can be eradicated. I have succeeded in curing men who have shot badly for years, and who were not even average shots, and have been able to improve their shooting a hundred per cent.; though I am forced to admit that I have not always been successful, and have to record many a failure, though where such has been the case it has generally been due to peculiarity of nervous temperament or conceit.

The first step which I would recommend a novice to take who aspires to become a crack shot, is to consult some friend who, understanding the subject, can recommend him to a gunmaker who is capable of fitting him with a gun which suits him, or who can detect the causes of his failing to shoot as well as he should. Over-anxiety, nervousness, too much smoking, or debility, are common causes of failure in shooting. Excess of any kind is bad, but excess in smoking and drinking are the commonest enemies to steady average shooting.

As regards gunmakers, I have myself for some forty years shot with guns made by the following well-known firms, viz., Joseph Lang, John Rigby, and later with rifles made by Holland and C. Lancaster; but for fit and balance, Joseph (now James) Lang's guns cannot be beaten. This much-esteemed gunmaker has continued his father's business, after

having received the most unjust treatment I ever heard of, and which occurred whilst he was suffering from a long illness. No one is better able to fit a beginner with a gun, or correct the many failings which young and impetuous sportsmen are subject to, than he is.

Whilst enumerating the above firms, I may as well remark that I consider James Lang, of Bond Street, the best gunmaker in London; Messrs. Holland and Rigby the best makers of grooved rifles; and Messrs. Lancaster of game rifles, their oval bore carrying well up to 300 yards. Mr. Henry, of Edinburgh, is the best maker in Scotland, and I may also add that I consider him second to none anywhere. Mr. Richards, of Preston, is the best cartridge-maker in England, that is to say, north of London; and Messrs. Henry and Dickson, of Edinburgh, are excellent gunmakers and gunfitters.

Having obtained a gun to suit him, the next thing which a beginner has to consider is how to use it, so as to be able to stop with a degree of certainty birds flying at every different angle.

Now, there are various ways of acquiring this art, and the novice can practise swinging his gun at spare times. For instance, even if he lives in a city such as London, and has to attend to office-work daily, he can, with very little trouble and in a very short time, say six or seven minutes every morning, before or after breakfast (the former for choice), make himself a proficient in the art of swinging his gun, if he follows out the plans I here lay down for his adoption.

Let him paste, at different heights and angles, some five or six No. 12 gun-wads on the walls of his room,

and then place himself facing the window, with his back towards them, holding his gun in the following manner, viz., the barrel resting on the left forearm, and the right hand grasping the small of the stock tightly, the first finger of the right hand being looser than the others, so as to be ready to pull the trigger. For this practice it is advisable to use a gun with hammers, and the nipples should be protected by having wads fixed on and around them. The hammers are useful for showing when the gun is level at the shoulder, and by their assistance a correct estimate can be formed as to whether the gun fits the user properly or the reverse; as if it does not fall immediately level and true, it will be evident that it is unsuitable.

When thus in position the practice can commence, by saying, for instance, 'No. 1 wad,' and then count 1, 2, 3, 4 quickly, turning sharply to the right-about at the word 'four,' and snapping at No. 1 wad. The light from the window, falling on the barrel, will serve to show at once if the aim has been correctly taken on the wad or not. If the latter, the practice must be continued at No. 1 wad until the aim on it is perfectly true. In like manner, when perfection at this one spot has been arrived at, the other wads may be taken in turn, but always calling out the number of the wad, and counting previous to turning round, and endeavouring to perform the motion as rapidly as possible. When proficiency at all the fixed wads has been acquired, the practice may be still further varied by the position of the wads being rapidly changed by a second person, while the user of the gun has his back turned. In this way a novice may become a complete

master of his gun, and thoroughly test its balance and fitting.

I may here mention a most important point. I believe that, after a man has acquired the confidence and perfect command of his gun which are necessary, the whole secret of his being a quick and brilliant shot consists in his holding the gun loosely ; nowhere should it be grasped tightly, except by the thumb and three last fingers of the right hand, round the small of the stock. I have proved that, in numerous cases of failure in shooting which have come to my knowledge, the cause has been overtight handling of the gun for fear of the recoil, and the result has been that such individuals always shot behind and below everything they aimed at.

Invariably when this habit and the fear of recoil (which latter should never exist with the gun in use nowadays) were overcome, they became first-class, steady shots. It is a very difficult habit to eradicate, and one which is ruinous to stopping a bird quickly ; but it can be overcome by practising with an unloaded gun, swinging it loosely, and snapping the trigger at some object. In practising to overcome this habit in a room, as before described, the gun should be carried on the shoulder when facing the window, and at the word 'four' it should at the 'right-about' or 'left-about' turns fall naturally into the left hand at the correct balance.

When the beginner has made himself perfect in the above-mentioned practice at fixed angles, he can commence practising at a swinging-bird, which can be set in motion by an assistant. For this purpose an iron plate, painted white, and made in various sizes, from

that of a snipe to that of a pigeon, is what I would recommend. It should be hung against a wall, in some safe place, in a field or a garden, by means of an iron pin, about a foot long, to which a chain of some four or five feet in length is attached. Two staples must then be fixed in the wall on either side of the chain, from five to ten feet (as may be most convenient) from the centre of the chain, where a thick shot-proof wire is attached; the latter is to be run through the staples; a cord is then fastened to the wire at such a length of the latter as not to be exposed to the shot, and the bird can thus be set in motion at any pace, to either hand, by means of one or two assistants, as may be required. The practice must be carried out in precisely the same manner as laid down for that at the gun-wads, and after a little time a novice will become a crack shot at swinging-birds, and hit them, no matter how rapidly they may be moving. I have known men become really crack shots through constantly shooting in matches at these swinging marks. Of course in such matches it is necessary to whitewash the bird after each shot, so as to prove a hit or a miss. I have no hesitation in asserting that the foregoing practices are of far greater value for covert-shooting than shooting pigeons out of traps; while for grouse-driving, or driving any winged game, it is by far the best practice at angle-shooting, inasmuch as any pace can be put on the bird if only there is sufficient height and width to hang it up, so as to afford the necessary swing.

I have found that pigeon-shooting from traps ruined my shooting at rocketing or driven birds,

and so I was forced to relinquish it, although I at times found it a sufficiently remunerative amusement. Indeed, I never quite got over the quick, flashy style of snap-shooting which I acquired from shooting at the Gun Clubs, despite some considerable time spent in endeavouring to overcome it; and I was never able to become a first-class shot at rocketing birds.

This shooting at 'rocketers' is, especially with impatient shots, more difficult to attain perfection at than perhaps any other kind of shooting. Shooting at wild pigeons, when the wind is high and the birds are coming in to roost in the larch-trees towards evening, is excellent practice; and driven partridges, flying overhead, or even starlings occasionally, are worth any amount of artificial substitutes.

On very bright days, when pheasants or partridges rise high over the shooter, there is always, if they are flying towards the sun, what may be termed a certain 'shade of light' (if such a term is admissible), which is for an instant shown on the neck and breast of the bird, at one angle, being visible just as the bird rises on catching sight of the 'stop' or 'heading gun' behind the 'stop;' and to a good shot this light is a deadly mark, and the prettiest shots are made by using it as a guide to the neck of the bird. On dark, foggy days this spot is naturally not so easily visible; but from constant practice the shooter knows where to look for it, and even if it is not perceptible the well-known spot is there, and he fancies he can discern it as the bird comes swinging over his head towards him. Even on the breasts of hen-birds this deadly 'shine' is at times visible, but it is of course more

markedly distinct on the breasts of the male birds, whether pheasant or partridge. I do not wish the 'shine' on the belly of the cock-pheasant to be mistaken for the spot which I mean; the former is of a duller colour. The mallards of the heavy duck and teal species show this shining spot on the neck, and the veteran sportsman is not slow to take advantage of it. The ducks themselves are of a different hue; but practice at flight-shooting enables the gunner to judge where the fatal spot should be. On bright days the sheen on the horseshoe of the cock-partridge is very apparent, though the neck may be hardly visible. Of course, much depends as to how the guns are placed for 'heading,' but in all well-organized drives the usual rule is to place all the 'heading guns' with their backs to the sun, if such an arrangement is possible. If once the horseshoe mark on the breast of a cock-partridge is visible, it is an easy matter to fire at the neck. The 'shine' is also visible on grouse when they rise suddenly over the 'butts,' but the pace at which they fly precludes it being made use of, save on a still bright day, when their flight is, as a rule, less rapid. Young grouse, or grouse just before they show symptoms of disease, appear quite dull and lustreless, even in the sunlight. Who that has ever shot blackcock on a bright frosty morning is likely to forget the way these grand birds 'thud' the heather when shot in the neck? The 'shine' is then plainly visible, and is a sufficient guide to the sportsman to enable him to stop the most deceptive old blackcock in the full swing of his flight.

There are, as I have before remarked, various methods of learning to shoot straight. Some acquire

the art by practice ; others apparently inherit it, and cannot explain to you how they do it ; but I consider that the plan which I have here advocated of firing at the neck, either between the horseshoe-marked breast and head of partridges, or at the 'shine' of the neck in any birds whose plumage displays the fatal spot, is most useful to the beginner at driven birds ; and, with such practice, no one who can lay any claim to the title of a good shot will require anything further to guide him, as judgment of pace becomes a matter of habit.

Of course, on days when the wind is strong the difficulty is at first very considerably increased ; but practice makes perfect, and the difficulty of pace becomes less formidable.

When calculating for this 'neck-shine' (if I may so term it), the sportsman must keep his eye fixed on the advancing bird, and the instant the 'shine' is visible he must fire with the swing of the bird, for the reason that when the gleaming spot is first visible, the bird is at the very best possible angle for being cleanly shot, and if allowed to come too near, the light will show too far over the breast and belly, and the bird will be 'tailored.'

I have known many men who were previously nervous, flashy shots, become good steady performers by my having initiated them in the art of thus waiting, but not too long, for the 'neck-shine,' and learning to fire at the exact moment when it appeared on the neck. Of course, at first, many of my pupils experienced some difficulty in learning so to shoot, and I have at times found myself also firing without the necessary swing to drop birds going at speed ; but I

venture to assert that, if the gunner adheres to shooting only at his own birds as they come straight towards him, and follows out the above plan, he will cease to pay attention to any birds which may be flying too wide of his limit.

One clean-shot bird is worth a dozen which have been tailored and rendered fit only for the feather-merchant.

Even with deer-stalking a similar rule to that given above is necessary to ensure clean shooting. It does not do to fire at the deer, neither must we fire only at his body, but we must try and imagine a small bull's-eye behind the shoulder; nor even then must that spot be covered point-blank exactly, but we must imagine this spot to be as it were sitting on the sight of the rifle, and, if the animal is in motion, due allowance must be given by firing in a lateral direction in advance of this spot, so as to allow time for the bullet to reach it after the trigger is pulled; the bullet will then, probably, strike the beast on some fatal spot in the belly or forequarters, and an 'Express' bullet is fatal in such parts. Nevertheless, I have known deer to travel a long distance after the bullet had gone clean through the belly; and on one occasion a stag which I had shot through the very point of the heart covered a distance of some three hundred yards before dropping. Nor is this at all an isolated case; for that well-known Nimrod of deer-stalkers, the late Mr. Horatio Ross, experienced the same on more than one occasion when he had shot a stag in the point of the heart. Of course, in these instances the bullet was solid, for the effect of an 'Express' or explosive bullet in such a spot would have necessarily been at once

fatal. But I fear I am wandering somewhat from the subject, and must reserve mention of stags and deer-stalking for the present.

Very good practice may be obtained for shooting 'rocketing' birds by using the glass-balls, the trap being placed on one side of a wall and the gun on the other; and many a man who feels that he is not a good enough shot to appear at the covert-side and hold his own, may very speedily learn how to make very fair shooting. The gun should be placed a few yards from the wall, and the glass-balls can be sent over at nearly any angle or height. Such practice would prove invaluable to men who live in London or large towns, and rarely get any chance of learning or keeping their hand in, for it is a very easy matter to go down by train to some farm in the country for an hour or two occasionally. Even if a glass-ball trap is not available, anyone who can throw can be requisitioned to throw turnips or a cricket-ball over a high wall, and so really useful practice can be obtained. In the latter substitute for the trap, it is advisable to have a man stationed behind the gun so as to return the ball. Tame pigeons when flying homewards are also good practice. They can be driven backward and forward over the gun.

Having described how to shoot birds at different angles, it remains for me to instruct the beginner in the more ordinary straight shooting, *i.e.*, at birds getting up in front of him. In this case he must fire at the bird the instant it settles down in its flight, after its first sudden rise from off the ground. He must not be in a hurry, but collect his thoughts, and notice if the bird is rising in its flight, by—if he is

shooting at partridges—keeping his eye on the first bird he means to stop out of the covey going away, and he must always fire over it when it is going very straight.

Nine times out of ten, when men are shooting at partridges in turnips late in the season, particularly in windy weather, they fire too low, and very often too quickly, under the mistaken notion that the wind will carry the birds out of shot before the gun can be laid on them. On days when the light is bad birds often appear much farther off than they really are, and thus many a bird gets off, which if fired at with steady nerves and in a deliberate manner would be stopped clean.

When birds of any kind are being driven towards the gun, it is necessary that the position of the body of the sportsman should be such that the gun may be easily laid on the bird, no matter what pace the latter may be coming down wind. I have found that at such times, or when shooting at rocketing pheasants, or any other ‘heading’ shot, the following position is the best calculated to enable the gun to be properly swung, viz. : secure as good a command of the flight as possible, and stand as easily and comfortably as you can ; the toes should be turned somewhat in, in a manner similar to the position of a cavalry soldier performing the sword-exercise, only that the feet should not be quite so far apart as in the latter instance. If the toes are turned outwards it is impossible to turn round as rapidly or steadily as when they are turned in. I need give no further explanation, for anyone can try it for himself, and he will at once see the advantage of so standing ; and, moreover, the necessity

of having to move the feet so as to recover the balance of an over-swing is obviated, for if the toes are turned inwards there is no occasion to do more than to turn them in the direction towards which the bird is flying past, the turn being made on the ball of the feet and the heels kept close to the ground. If the bird is passing towards the right rear, then the left toe should be so turned in that direction as to admit of the body moving naturally with the swing, and this can often be effected without moving the feet more than this. It is more difficult to turn to the right with a swinging shot than to the left; but if the left toe is well turned in the difficulty is very much modified, and a very slight turn of the right foot is all that is necessary. When the swing is required to be to the left rear, the right toe should be pointing well to the left front, so that the body alone can easily swing with the gun.

A very little practical experience will serve to show that where birds are flying too fast to be stopped in front, or are second-barrel shots, they can be much more easily and successfully killed by making use of the above position than by any other. When shooting from difficult or badly arranged 'heading butts,' one is apt to get a bit demoralized when birds come on us unawares, or at such angles that it is impossible to get on them quickly enough; in such cases the position I have described will be found of the greatest assistance, and serve to go far towards overcoming the difficulties which may offer, no matter how fast or awkwardly the flight may come.

I have from time to time been asked to explain the theory of straight shooting, *i.e.*, how such may be attained, but I have ever preferred to remain silent on

the subject, nor have I any very great opinion of theoretical instruction on such matters. It is sufficient to say that all who try to be good shots will be sure in the end to succeed in being able to judge distance and pace. The difficulty may be said to consist chiefly in determining the angle at which the bird may be flying, and so aiming that the shot will strike that most vital spot, the neck. This 'angle-shooting,' as it may be termed, presents greater difficulties on some days than on others. Bad light may prove detrimental to success, or maybe the sportsman may be bilious, or otherwise out of sorts, and cannot therefore shoot up to his usual form. In such cases I have known men who, being wonderfully good shots as a rule, have preferred to stop shooting and go home sooner than make a mess of it, being, by reason of their livers being out of order, etc., unable to shoot steadily or judge the pace of the birds correctly. People are perpetually asking the most absurd questions, as to how far they ought to fire ahead of this, that, and the other description of bird. Such queries are common enough in the *Field* and other sporting papers. Now how on earth can it be supposed that it is possible for anyone to inform them on this point? All kinds of birds do not fly at the same pace. Circumstances must alter cases. Wind, pace, angle, heaps of things have to be taken into consideration. Such must ever be a matter for judgment, and practice alone will enable the sportsman to form a correct estimate. The estimate having been formed, as it must be, instantaneously, the gun is swung on to, and then ahead of, the bird, and the necessary allowance is thereby given. There is no time on such occasions for theory. Practice and common-sense are

what are needed, and all the theories in the world are unavailing at such times. The only theory which I know, and which may be said to be of use, is that which will serve to prevent a nervous shot from firing too quickly. Let him determine to count one, two, three, four, before he fires, and the time he thus gains—or, as he may imagine, loses—will give him an opportunity to collect himself and make the necessary calculation as to where to aim and when to fire. No theory of which I am aware is of equal use to this. As I have before remarked, it is in the power of anyone gifted with ordinary intelligence and ordinary sight to learn to judge pace and distance; and nothing further than to put up the gun and swing with the bird, hare, rabbit, or whatever it may be desired to shoot, so as to lodge the charge in a vital spot, is necessary. I have shown where that spot may be looked for and seen, and all the theory in the world can do no more than this. Only let the gun be properly handled. Due swing cannot be given if it is held too tightly. A man need not hug his gun as if it were his wife.

There can be no greater mistake than for a nervous man to have recourse to artificial remedies for the purpose of quieting his nerves. Such remedies only answer for a short time, and in the long-run make matters infinitely worse than they were before. Far better is it for anyone so constituted to pay a little more attention to his mode of living, and far more manly and worthy than to be dependent on artificial means. Where young men have ruined their nerves through their own carelessness, it behoves them to let Nature have fair play, and a chance of reasserting her

supremacy ; and by such means they will find that a healthy state of nerves will be more rapidly gained than by the use of artificial ones, which I regret to say are but too often a curse to many an otherwise good sportsman. When a man's nerves are demoralized, his whole life becomes a misery to him, and such a state of things is unpleasant to witness. Supposing a man so affected with nervousness to be placed in a position, such as tiger-shooting, etc., where his very life may depend on his perfect self-control and steadiness of nerve, what on earth would he be able to do in such a contingency ? Yet such sport is vastly different to shooting harmless birds and deer. I can quite understand what a certain kind of nervousness is like, for I have many a time been no stranger to it when fox-hunting, and have felt my heart beat hard with excitement and anxiety to successfully negotiate a big or awkward place ; but, save when drawing trigger on a good stag, or maybe a woodcock, where such birds are but rare visitants, and the killing of one is looked upon as a triumph, I cannot find excuse for nervousness, unless it proceeds from disease. As a rule it is the result of carelessness in living—too much liquor, too much tobacco, or over-late hours—and the man has only himself to thank for such a state of things, and a little common-sense care of himself will tend to make him a far happier being and a far better sportsman. Given good health and good sight, our nerves are very much in our own keeping, and we may be said to so far possess the whip-hand of ourselves.

My advice to a beginner may be briefly summed up

as follows : take care of your health by living as you ought to live ; get a good gun and one that fits you as it should, and learn to use it as I have recommended, and with a little practice in the field you need have no fear that you will not learn to shoot well and hold your own anywhere.

CHAPTER II.

Snipe-shooting—How to shoot snipe—Mr. Foster (G.P.O., Dublin)—Formation of snipe's wings—Enemies of snipe—Snipe to be approached noiselessly—Advantages of old-fashioned guns—The utility of hammers—Small charges of powder for snipe-shooting—Guns for snipe-shooting—Superiority of Irish snipe—Standing rules for snipe-shooting—Size of bore for snipe guns—E.C. 7. black powder—Judging distance of snipe—Size of shot and concentrators for snipe-shooting—Testing guns—Sizes of shot—How to beat a snipe bog—Flight of Irish snipe compared with others—Use of drag-rope for snipe-shooting—Deterioration of Irish snipe-bogs—Dangerous walking—Anecdote of day's snipe-shooting with Lord Gormanstown—How to avoid being bogged—Throwing guns—The delights of being bogged—Flights of incoming snipe and woodcock—Time of year to shoot snipe—Driven snipe—Meagre accounts regarding natural history of snipe—Notice of arrival of snipe by bog-rangers—Feeding-grounds of snipe in hard frost—Shooting snipe on the ground—Snipe using their bills to rise—Reason of woodcock rising noisily at times—Flight of jack snipe—Snipe-breeding in Britain—Cooking of snipe—Young of full snipe—Young of jack snipe—Anecdotes of the late Mr. Foster—A good snipe-shot a good shot anywhere.

THE flight of a snipe is very peculiar, and requires a different style of shooting from that of any other bird—a style all its own; and after shooting for a time at ordinary birds, such as pheasants, partridges, and the like, it as a rule requires some little practice to get into the way of accounting for snipe. With a 'right and left' at snipe it is necessary to snap at the first bird the instant it turns up-wind after rising from the ground. To accomplish this the bird must be taken

quickly, and before it turns over for its first spurt down-wind. A good snipe-shot will generally succeed in stopping his first bird with his right barrel as it thus turns in its flight, but a beginner will find that there is but a second of time allowed him in which to get his first barrel in. I myself began shooting snipe before I was fifteen years old, and for many years practised on Irish snipe only, and was at that time acquainted with the very best snipe-shots that, during an experience extending over forty-five years, I have ever met.

A Mr. Foster, of the Post-office in Dublin, was the very best of them all ; and I can hardly do better than give my readers the benefit of the advice and instruction which he from time to time imparted to me, and which I have, over and over again, proved to be that best calculated to ensure making a good average on this most difficult of all birds to bring to book. Often when our party consisted of four guns, save when the birds rose in a 'wisp,' I noticed Mr. Foster was invariably the last of us to fire, and even after we had all emptied our barrels I have known him wait longer still, and shouting out, 'Go on, you blackguards!' he would drop his right and left as surely as he put his gun to his shoulder, and unless it were blowing half a gale of wind I but rarely ever saw him miss a snipe. His rule was one which I have ever since adopted, viz., to wait on snipe until they settle in their flight, which they invariably do after a few energetic twists to get out of danger.

In order to enable them to evade their natural enemies, snipe are provided with extra strength in the joints of their wings, and the latter are at the same

time so light and fine, that they can twist and turn with the greatest rapidity, more quickly than any other bird I know of, and they can keep up this rotatory motion for an indefinite time, especially when in danger from their greatest enemy, the merlin, which, with the exception of the male sparrow-hawk, is the only bird which can successfully circumvent the fast twisting flight of the snipe, and more often than not achieves its object rather by exhausting its victim, being possessed of greater strength and endurance, to say nothing of being generally in the highest possible condition, induced by constantly stooping at snipe over bogs and marshes in all sorts of weather. Anyone who has ever seen a snipe, 'roading' for its own amusement near a breeding swamp must have been struck with the everlasting twisting circles which it is able to keep up. It may therefore be concluded that the less snipe are alarmed when they are put up, the sooner they will settle in their flight. I have observed when snipe-shooting in the company of other guns on the dark, soft, west-windy days so dear to the snipe-shooter, days when the birds lie so close that they may be often passed over, that it is very necessary to keep one's self extra steady, for the very fact of being able to approach so close to the birds before they rise but causes them to twist and turn about more than at other times, by reason of their being more alarmed when they are put up, and it is necessary to be as quiet and move as noiselessly as possible, and to be careful not to fire until the bird is well out, or crossing up-wind, which all snipe will do if not too much scared, and thereby forced to make too large a circle out of shot before turning to face the wind.

Somehow or other I always preferred shooting snipe, and could kill them better, too, with the guns which were used formerly than with the more modern improved ones ; but whether using hammer or hammerless guns, I could never make a decent average on snipe by using large charges of powder. As regards hammer guns, I can but repeat what I asserted in the *Field* some years ago, that the hammers are most useful as a guide, and particularly so in aligning one's barrels on snipe. They serve to show at once if the rib is level—a most important point when snipe-shooting, which latter sport requires the greatest nicety. Nearly all left-barrel shots are long ones, and therefore a very slight error in aim is fatal to success on so small a bird as a snipe, and carelessness often causes an unsatisfactory, fluky style of shooting, which frequently tends to produce a general feeling of unhappiness and demoralization, and to spoil what would otherwise have been a pleasurable day's sport.

The best gun I ever owned for snipe-shooting was a Joe Manton, which weighed just under 7 lb., a 16 bore ; and in those days I never used more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ drachms of Pigou and Wilks' fine-grain powder. The latter came well up into the nipples of the gun, and I but very rarely experienced a missfire with it, unless both I and my gun chanced to get bogged, or some such contretemps occurred. I have at the present time a muzzle-loader, made by Dickson, of Edinburgh, in 1858, and this is a far better gun for snipe-shooting than any breechloader I ever saw. I cannot but think that the fact of the breech being narrower and the hammers serving as a guide to the eye, and their leading to the rib, which rises full and prominently, has

much to do with it. It is, in fact, made on the same principle as the percussion rifles formerly made by old Mr. Purdey, and very similar to one which I had constructed for me by Rigby.

It is necessary for anyone who desires to go in extensively for snipe-shooting to have a gun made expressly for it. Winter snipe-shooting in Ireland is a very different affair to snipe-shooting in Scotland, or India, or any other place I know of, and the Irish birds are far more difficult to shoot. They appear to be more in their natural condition, and stronger on the wing than elsewhere. If theory is of little use in other shooting, it is especially so in snipe-shooting, and a beginner will have quite enough to do to follow out the few standard rules which I here give for his benefit, and they are these :

In addition to his gun suiting him, which latter is a *sine quâ non*, I recommend him not to use a hammerless gun, but to have the hammers made so as to be straight up when at full cock, and not thrown back on to the breech, and the rib well raised, so as to easily catch the eye. If the gun suits him it will come up truly and well ; and whilst waiting for the bird to stop twisting and to steady down in its flight, he will have plenty of time afforded him to lay it on properly ; and let him remember that it takes but very little to kill a snipe, even at a long distance ; one grain of shot only will suffice to bring it down, especially out of a small-bore gun.

I cannot recommend the use of guns of smaller bore than No. 16 for several reasons—one of which is, that when shooting on a windy day a certain amount of weight in a gun is necessary in order to keep it steady.

I have used E.C. powder for snipe-shooting, and have had every reason to be satisfied with it; but I am free to admit that I far prefer a smaller charge of the black powder to which I have before made reference, though it may be slower of ignition, and I have ever found that I could make cleaner and generally better shooting with it; and the smoke was no detriment, unless the birds rose in large 'wisps' of fifty or sixty at a time, and there was no wind to blow it away. With $2\frac{1}{2}$ drachms of Curtis and Harvey's powder I very rarely experienced any annoyance from the smoke, for the latter powder is so excellent of its kind.

The novice at snipe-shooting may find himself often puzzled as to the distance at which birds get up, and be doubtful as to whether to fire at them as being too far off. I would therefore advise him on entering a snipe-bog to take note of some object, such as bog-myrtle, rush, or blades of grass ahead of him, and which he computes as being some forty or fifty yards off, and he will be surprised, if he paces off the intervening distance, how very much nearer such objects really are than they appear to be. He will thus be better able to form a correct estimate of the distance at which he may fire at the birds, and will be less likely to shoot carelessly, finding he can afford to take more time over them. Many a snipe, too, is killed at over seventy yards. When snipe are very wild and the wind is blowing heavily I have found concentrators of great value; but in such weather I always use heavier shot (not chilled) than on calm days, No. 8 for the right, and Nos. 7 or 6 in the left barrel. In still weather I find No. 9 (unchilled) and No. 8 are the

best sizes. On frosty days, when snipe take a deal of stopping and get up wild, I find No. 5 in the right and the same sized shot with concentrators for the left answer well—indeed, when snipe are at all wild, concentrators may be advantageously used with Nos. 6, 7, or 8 shot.

It is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule for the size of shot which should be used, for guns vary so much in the size of shot which suits them best. However, the best plan is to test the gun with different charges and different sizes of shot at a target—the latter a moving one for choice and if possible, to shoot at it from forty up to seventy yards. Nor can there be a greater mistake than the use of too heavy charges of powder. The shot is thereby spread too much; and if this error is to be avoided in 12-bore guns, it is of greater consequence with those of smaller calibre, for the closer the shot carries the better, added to which the recoil is much less with a light charge. If not over-light, I maintain that the smaller the size of the shot which is used for snipe the better; but it must be, of course, in proportion to the weather, etc. I am perfectly well aware that many people take exception to the use of such small shot when snipe-shooting, by reason of it being considered too small for use at any duck, teal, etc., which may get up. Well, my own experience goes to prove that such is not the case, for during the thirty-five years in which I shot over Irish bogs, where there was a variety of such birds to be found in the drains and mosses, I never found No. 8 too small, and I have at times killed wild geese with it. In those days there was plenty of cover to admit of duck and teal being

approached, though as often as not we could see them at some distance, and so had time to change our cartridges if we wished to, but we troubled very little about them when after snipe; and I maintain that if it is desired to make a bag of the latter birds, they alone should be paid attention to, and other varieties of birds unheeded, even if they do chance to get up within shot.

A snipe-bog should be beaten across wind zigzag, *i.e.*, perhaps rather more down wind than across it, and thus every piece of it from side to side is taken. The ground should never be taken at full length at once, for nothing can be more detrimental to sport, inasmuch as all the birds will rise and go up-wind on the beats which are left behind, or left unbeaten at the sides.

When partridge-shooting in turnips, the best way of breaking up the coveys is to beat round the edges of the field and gradually towards the centre, but avoiding the latter part of the field until the end of the beat. In snipe-shooting, however, it is advisable to keep as much as possible on the whip-hand of them, *viz.*, to let them have their favourite flight of up-wind, and to keep on the windward side of the beat. If a bog is beaten on this principle many easy cross-shots will be obtained.

As I have observed, the less noise the better for the sport, and I have made some very good bags of snipe when shooting quite alone, and with no other companion save an old retrieving pointer, though I cannot lay claim to having succeeded in ever making such bags as are often heard of being made abroad, where the snipe are heavy with fat, and fly heavily

and lazily compared with those in Britain. Nor do I think such shooting is to be compared with our own, where the birds fly quick and sharp, and there is often but little cover for them, and the ground requires to be scientifically worked. There are days such as I have before referred to, when snipe lie so close that it is almost impossible to get them to rise without the aid of a steady pointer or setter; and when even this fails, recourse may be had to the use of a long cord, here and there leaded so as to make it lie close to the ground, and drawn by two men. The guns walk in rear of the cord, and a great number of birds may at times be shot in this way. But the men carrying the cord must walk slowly. The cord should be about forty-five yards in length, and the guns require to keep towards its centre. It is advisable to have a boy or assistant to walk in rear of the guns for the purpose of clearing the rope from time to time of any obstruction, and he should be cautioned to be silent and move as quietly as possible. The slower the men with the cord proceed, the less noise the rope will make. I have often known snipe lie so close that they would not rise until the cord was actually on them. When snipe are in this humour they will wait until the guns have passed them, and then rise and fly up-wind, and under such circumstances they do not give the guns a chance to wait for them to steady in their flight, and they are so frightened that they twist and turn about for so long a time that they must be shot at while they are zigzagging about, added to which the having to turn round places the gun at an additional disadvantage. The best plan on such occasions is to let the bird go well away and take it

the instant it settles in the air, firing well over it; the chances are that one or two grains of shot may strike it, if careful allowance is made, for the shot describes a somewhat wide pattern at such a distance. Of course, it does not do to fire such long shots at partridges or other birds, as they take more killing, and I have invariably found that when I have dropped a snipe by a long shot it has generally been struck in the head or the pinion. It takes very little to pierce the fragile skull or to destroy the delicate mechanism of the exquisitely-formed wing. Even a few feathers of the latter being broken by a grain or two of shot will oblige a snipe to alight in the nearest rush, and it may thus be easily finished off on rising again.

Years ago the snipe-shooting on some of the Irish bogs was wonderfully good, but recently, owing to their having been drained, many of them have become but indifferent feeding-grounds for these birds. I have known as many as seventy-five couple of full, and five or six couple of jack snipe bagged by two guns in a day's shooting. Snipe-shooting is a very decided test of a gunner's ability, and anyone who has been used to shoot only at other game requires some little practice to get into the way of it. For my own part, I prefer snipe-shooting to any other, especially if the bog is a safe one to walk, but I have been on bogs which were so unsafe that they rendered good shooting impossible, and it was indeed nervous work; and that such was the case is hardly to be wondered at, when now and again one of the guns disappeared from view—that is to say, all but his head and shoulders.

Some, now many, years ago, a party of three of us—

Lord Gormanstown, his agent, and myself—started to shoot a well-known bog near Navan. Lord Gormanstown then weighed over seventeen stone, his agent fifteen, and my own weight was a little over eleven. We had all been in the habit of walking bogs all our lives and were regular bog-trotters, or at all events considered we knew all about it, though, as events proved, we had yet a good deal to learn, and the knowledge was not destined to be acquired without some unpleasant experiences. We began the day well enough, and commenced shooting about half-past ten, and for a time we shot fairly well. Eventually we reached a celebrated mossy spring, which we found to be literally swarming with snipe, and ‘wisps’ of them kept on getting up in front of us, somewhat over-wild, as there was no wind. We soon ascertained that the walking was becoming just a bit dangerous, at all events for my two companions, who were extra heavy, for no sooner had we entered upon the moss than the entire surface for some fifty yards began to rise and fall like a wave of the sea. I reminded my companions of what their combined weights amounted to, and what must happen if they were not careful, and begged them to get on the outer edges, and go forward, while the ranger and I, being lighter, could walk the bog and put the birds out to them; but Lord Gormanstown was far too keen for his right and left, and replied, ‘I am sure I can walk a bog as well as you can, and the grass here is a guide to safe footing.’ His agent was not quite so keen, and kept a few yards behind. Lord Gormanstown, sticking to his point, put his foot forward on to a tuft of grass, and to our horror down he went. His agent, one of the best fellows in the world (I grieve to say since

dead), was so amused, and shook so with laughter, that he also suddenly went down up to his armpits. I shall never forget the rapid change in his expression, from extreme mirth to terror. The day being cold and frosty rendered their position all the more miserable. Neither I nor the ranger could help them, for had we gone near them we should have shared the same fate. There was nothing for it but to send the ranger off to his house, a mile away, for the strongest rope he could find, and in less than three-quarters of an hour he returned, and we were not long in extricating the lighter of our unfortunate friends, whom I was left to cheer up as best I could while waiting for the rope; but to lug out seventeen stone was only achieved after an infinite amount of pulling and hauling. They were both so cold and wet that they had to go off to the keeper's house, take off their clothes, and retire between the blankets until they were dried; and I was left to finish the day alone, and had a very fine day's sport, but the birds were so wild from want of a wind that I could not get within easy range of them. Altogether our bag amounted to some twenty-five couple of full snipe.

Should any of my readers not have experienced the sensation of being bogged, I will endeavour to explain to them how to act should such ever be their misfortune. Even the most experienced bog-shooters in Ireland are liable to be bogged at times, for, in the excitement of turning round to fire at a bird, one is apt to forget how precarious one's footing is, and one step in the wrong place and down you go. However, there is really little or no danger if, immediately a person finds himself going, he throws himself flat on

his side or back, as may be best under the circumstances, and at the same time throws his gun to his attendant, the latter being indispensable in a dangerous bog. These unshod 'gossoons,' if up to the work, will rarely fail to catch a gun if it is thrown properly to them, if they cannot get near enough to take it. To throw a gun properly, it should be held by the barrels in the left hand, and the small of the stock with the right, which should, if possible, throw the stock up into the air a little more forward than the barrels. By throwing a gun in this manner, an accident can be prevented. I have seen many a gun thus thrown, and never yet saw one missed, or any explosion take place. In Ireland it is looked upon quite as a matter of course to thus throw a loaded gun—'Sure, yer honour, I can't miss it!'

The sensation of being bogged is decidedly unpleasant; and if one were not to throw one's self immediately on one's side or backwards, there are some bogs I know of where one would run every risk of disappearing for good and all; however, there is generally strength enough in the peat to support the weight of the body lengthwise. Anyhow, there are but a few inches of peat between one's body and eternity at times, and such was the predicament in which my two unfortunate companions found themselves placed; one which I myself have many a time also experienced.

After the full moon, snipe are generally plentiful enough in some of our Irish bogs, and woodcock also make use of these light nights, though the latter are more apt to change their intended flights when high winds prevail than the former.

Snipe are not considered worth shooting in Ireland until after a frosty night or two in November, when they are in perfect condition, nor can any better bird come to table if properly cooked; woodcock are also better in November, and after they have had a few days' rest after their long flight against the strong gales they have often to encounter, though at times the latter are so heavy that they never reach Ireland at all in any numbers.

As may be inferred, snipe afford infinitely better sport with a few days' rest and good feeding after their arrival. At times I have shot at driven snipe when they have been too wild to get near enough to shoot in the ordinary way, which is frequently the case in still, frosty weather, and capital sport it is, too. They scarcely ever fly low in such weather, and afford excellent 'rocketing' practice. In dark windy weather, however, it is better to walk them up in the ordinary way, as they then invariably fly low.

I have noticed that naturalists never give the interesting accounts of the habits of snipe and woodcock, as they might do, and as these birds deserve. Such brief notices as from time to time appear respecting them are due to sportsmen, and yet there is so much which is interesting regarding them.

Our Irish bog-rangers know more about them than anyone else, whether naturalists or sportsmen, and they can tell (and are invariably correct in their information) the latter the very day on which the birds will arrive. They note the arrival of the winter visitants, such as redwings, etc., which latter birds generally appear about the beginning of October, and the snipe generally arrive within a few hours after the former

birds ; woodcock, also, arrive much in the same way, but they do not always show on arrival, for they keep to the hills for a time to rest before taking up their more permanent winter quarters.

When the frost is long and hard, and the best feeding-spots are frozen over, snipe and woodcock go to the sea-coasts in search of the worms which are more easily obtainable. During the day they lie miles away from these feeding-grounds, if there is no cover near ; but I have often seen them at night dashing into the drains and soft spots along the high-water line. I have frequently picked up snipe starved to death, but very rarely a woodcock under such conditions. I have picked the latter up dead from other causes, but they are strong flyers, and seem to know when a hard frost is coming, and invariably disappear until it is over, when they return.

Snipe have a predilection for a particular spring or marshy spot, and, after being flushed, they will, if not hit, or very much frightened, return to it.

Occasionally, when the heading gun, I have been forced to shoot snipe and woodcock on the ground in frosty weather, where the covert was very thick. At times it is not possible to kill them in any other way, especially in thick copses. Even if routed out with spaniels, they will at such times circle low and light again quite safely, and never give a chance. I have also known coverts swarming with cock and snipe in a frost ; the springs being so protected by reason of the cover growing low over them as to be seldom frozen over entirely, and so, when such severe weather has been general over the country, the birds have congregated to them from all parts.

Snipe soon suffer in a severe frost, and get thin and die ; but woodcock are stronger and better able to feed, and so retain their condition ; and when the ground gets too hard, they fly away to softer feeding-grounds, as I have before stated.

It is curious and interesting to watch these birds feeding ; and I have often done so when waiting for duck-flights, etc. They rise by means of their bills, which they place lightly on the mud ; but if in their flight they use it too energetically, they are at times apt to be hampered by it at starting. On bogs and moors it is not possible to see them rise, but as a rule such ground is not too soft for them, and they are therefore able to rise more rapidly than from off mud-banks, etc. I have often seen a woodcock, and now and again even a snipe, on bare spots, while my pointer has 'set' it, and have been much interested in watching the former trying to make up his mind which side he would make for, and then, suddenly placing his bill on the ground, open his wings at the same time.

Once, while so watching, I discovered why these birds make so much noise when rising in covert. It seems that they have little or no power of springing into the air before getting on the wing, and their bill seems to be rather an encumbrance when rising out of thick covert, unless it is placed on the ground for the purpose of aiding the rise with the wings ; and their bills being of such a length, rather serve to make their heads somewhat over-heavy, and, if they were not therefore placed on the ground and thus used as a lever, the birds at times would be unable to rise quickly enough.

Jack snipe are very amusing, and are so often

missed as to be the most tantalizing little birds. They have a flight quite peculiar to themselves, and are far more difficult to kill than the full snipe. Save the hoopoe, I know of no bird which, possessing so peculiar and uncertain a flight, is so very easily killed as a jack snipe.

Snipe breed a good deal on some moors in England and Scotland, and thereby afford plenty of opportunity to a naturalist for studying their ways. They are often seen when grouse-shooting in August, and I have got as many as two and three couple a day, but they are then not worth the powder and shot expended on them. Their flight is weakly and their flesh is soft and flabby, and altogether very unlike the same bird in November, after the first frost. They say a snipe should be cooked by being in the cook's pocket while she is preparing the joint for dinner—*i.e.*, it should be as lightly cooked as possible. An underdone snipe or woodcock is a delicious morsel, but if overdone is simply abominable, and more like leather than meat, and most indigestible. Indeed, it is impossible to tell what one is eating unless informed. I have at large dinner-parties seen other birds successfully passed off for snipe, the heads having been removed.

Although the young of snipe are frequently to be found in England and Scotland, I have never seen them in Ireland, though I am aware that they have been found from time to time in the latter country. A young snipe is a queer little creature, and very similar to a very small ball of down when a few days old; and the young of the jack snipe is still more peculiar, and very small and soft. The latter do not breed in

Ireland, but a few remain to breed in England and Scotland. The nest of the latter bird requires a fine-nosed pointer to discover it during the breeding season, though during the winter months the scent is so strong that no ordinarily good-nosed dog can well miss it; and for its size, its scent is stronger than that of any bird with which I am acquainted.

I have before made reference to Mr. Foster, of the Dublin Post-office, as having been a notoriously good shot at snipe. It is now some thirty-five years since I first saw him shoot, and I can truthfully assert that during that period I have never seen him equalled for cool calculation, often under the most disadvantageous and trying circumstances. I have known him more than once when bogged and going down actually kill with his right and left, not only at birds which had risen before him, but I have seen him under such circumstances drop a bird with his right hand in front of him, and then, while in the act of turning round to throw himself backward to avoid being bogged, kill another over his left shoulder, and, calling out to me 'Catch!' throw me his gun, which I just managed to secure. His carrier was near enough to him to have caught it, and I wondered why he should have thrown it to me, as I had my own gun, and so had only one hand to catch with. I knew him to be a cool hand, but began to think he had thrown it to me by reason of his not being so self-composed as I had thought. I remarked to him: 'Why on earth did you want to play cricket with me? You might have bulged the barrels of your gun against mine!' 'Oh!' he replied, 'I only wanted to see if you were as cool as you appeared.' 'You must have had very considerable

confidence in my powers of catching,' I said. 'Well, come and drag me out,' was all the reply he made; and, having handed the guns to my man, I succeeded in pulling him out. He afterwards told me that the reason why he had thrown the gun to me and not to his carrier was that, from the way in which he was sinking himself, he could see that his carrier, who was close behind him, was in nearly as bad a plight as he was, and so he dared not trust him to catch it.

I never knew his equal. His heart was in the right place, and I believe sincerely that his soul is there too, for I regret to say that he is now no more. No one more kindly and true-hearted ever lived, and he spared no pains to instruct me; and I shall ever feel grateful for all he taught me, and proud of having been fortunate in having so good a Mentor, and this must be my excuse for again referring to him, inasmuch as by so doing I am able to pay some slight tribute of affection and respect to his memory.

I have, after much observation, come to the conclusion that if a man is a good snipe-shot he will generally manage to hold his own anywhere, even though his shooting experiences may not have previously extended further than that sport.

CHAPTER III.

Guns for snipe-shooting—Bend of stock—Bent and straight stocks—Utility of hammers—Snap shots at roe-deer—Snap-shooting—Shooting from the hip—Rifle-shooting at pennies—Rook rifle-shooting—Flying shots with rifle—Rough shooting over dogs—Driving and shooting over dogs—Shooting over dogs late in season—Spoiling well trained dogs by use too late in season—Use of falcons over wild birds—Driving wild birds—System of driving—Shooting alongside driving-beaters—Detractors of driving—Preservation of falcons—Advantages gained by preserving falcons—Indiscriminate slaughter and sport—Evils attendant on overstocking—Sport conducive to manliness—Woodcock—Their passage—Pigeon-shooting good practice for woodcock-shooting—Cock lighting after being flushed—Feeding-grounds—Cock-shooting at twilight—Cock remaining on hills till after first frost—Nerves and noisy beaters—Irish beaters—Cock-shooting in hard frost—Cock on the feed—Solitary habits of woodcock—Wariness of woodcock—Beating for woodcock—Springs and feeding-grounds of cock—Beating bushes, etc., to gun—Marking flight of cock in strange shootings—Sport with two guns—Use of cockers—Use of markers—Cock bred in the Highlands—Nest of woodcock—Tactics of hen woodcock on nest—Woodcock carrying their young.

IN referring to guns suitable for snipe-shooting, I did not make mention respecting any peculiarity in the bend of the stock, inasmuch as people vary very considerably in shape; but any good gunmaker will know what is required, if it is explained to him, when a snipe-gun is ordered, that the position of the hammers and rib are required to be such as I have advocated. Some men require the stocks of their guns to be more

bent than do others. As a rule, bent stocks are more suitable for young men ; when, however, a man attains to an age of between fifty and seventy, he requires a straighter stock, otherwise, with imperfect or aged sight, he is apt to become somewhat slow in getting on his birds, and the straight stock tends very much to remedy this defect. I cannot recommend the use of a very bent stock for any ordinary person, but more especially for either the very young or those who are over middle life—the latter class, for the reason I have given ; the former, because such a shape is very apt to induce a slow, poking style, and to be subversive of quick, sharp, brilliant shooting. I may give $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches as the extreme limit of bend.

I am well aware that there are some short men whose arms require very careful fitting, and I have also known others who, from being in the habit of constantly using bent stocks in field shooting, have been very indifferent shots at winged game in covert. There is, of course, a medium in the bend of stocks, as in all other things. At the present day stocks are, as a rule, made much straighter than formerly. This, I take it, is very much due to the increased fashion of pigeon-shooting from traps, where time is of so much consequence. A well-fitting, straight stock is generally the winning shape, and this shape is the most useful for all quick shooting, such as driven grouse or partridges, and low-flying pheasants ; but when it comes to long shots in the open at snipe or duck, etc., or at high rocketing pheasants, it is desirable to see the rib rise well up between the hammers, and a medium bend in the stock helps the eye in aligning along the rib very materially. Rib, hammers, and

sight all require to be level, the first as a guide to the last, the second to the first ; and unless the wind is very high and causes birds to swing over-much in their flight, there is always time to run the eye up the rib between the hammers and observe if they are level or not.

I have found hammers invaluable for rifle-shooting at deer in this respect. A stag will not always stand still for our accommodation, and give us five minutes in which to take a careful, steady aim ; and it is very frequently necessary to shoot at it when there is no more time given than to obtain a snap-shot just as it is disappearing into thick woods. I have at times been fortunate enough to get on to a roe-deer going full gallop, and in such instances have had to trust very much to the hammers to guide me in keeping my rifle level, for there has been only time to swing forward to the spot the deer has been making for, of course, making use of the sight as best I could to secure the proper elevation. The same principle applies equally to cylinder-shot guns, whether shooting at ground or winged game, for, in the former case, there is probably but a narrow ride of some two or three feet in width, or an equally constricted space between the trees in the latter, in which to get a barrel in.

In the Highlands, where the woods of Scotch firs extend for miles and there is an utter absence of cut 'rides,' or where walking in line through young woods, it is necessarily all 'snap-shooting,' and everything depends upon the perfect balance and fit of a gun ; and it frequently happens in such thick coverts that there is not even time to bring the gun to the shoulder, it being necessary to fire from the hip as often as not.

To attempt to get a gun to the shoulder in such cases means being behind everything fired at, whether it be ground or winged game.

I maintain that in these days of nitro compounds, smokeless powder, etc., when recoil is reduced to a minimum, we should be able to shoot nearly as well and straight from the hip as from the shoulder ; and here the advantage of holding the gun loosely is more than ever manifest. That such excellence is obtainable is proved by the performance of the little 'Nimrod,' who shoots better from his hip than anyone else can from the shoulder ; and the fact of his being able to break glass balls with a rifle from his hip is conclusive that we ourselves are generally very much behind the times in our ability with a gun, and it argues very little for our own performances, that with the perfect guns of the present day we are unable to shoot without shouldering our guns and taking careful aim. Nor do I think that shooting at the present time, despite all the modern advantages and improvements which we possess, is advancing as it should. I can well remember, thirty years ago, a relation of my own who used to throw two pennies into the air and rarely fail to hit them right and left with a breech-loading rifle. An uncle of mine was also able to perform the same feat, and could knock over rabbits with a rifle-bullet, even when going as hard as they could up-hill. Many years ago we had regularly organized matches with rifles at rooks : every rook shot at was obliged to be on the wing at the time. One but rarely hears of such scientific practice nowadays, and it is but a stupid and monotonous performance shooting rooks by the dozen whilst sitting on the

boughs of a tree, with light rifles with which it would hardly do credit to a lady to hit a dozen No. 12 wads at twenty-five yards in twelve shots. I must admit I fail to see wherein the amusement in shooting rooks in that fashion consists. There is most certainly no sport in the performance. Pot-hunting it may be, and there it begins and ends. It rather tends to strengthen the assertion of the French author who declared that we Englishmen care less for sport than slaughter, and are well content if we have a sufficiency of the latter.

I can hardly lay too great stress on the necessity for not holding either a gun or a rifle too tightly, for if held loosely and easily, both rapidity and correctness of aim are far more easily secured. I have often, when yachting, shot birds of all sorts on the wing, with a rifle made for me by Rigby, and with one of his rook rifles I shot a woodcock flying overhead. Mr. Fraser, of Auchnagarn, Inverness-shire, formerly of the 92nd Highlanders, thought so much of a woodcock being shot with a rifle, that he reported the circumstance in the *Field*, and the account of it now lies before me. However, there really was nothing very much in it after all, as many people are well aware. Our American cousins would not very highly esteem such a feat.

I have read a very lengthy correspondence in *Land and Water*, the opinions of many well-known sportsmen, as to driving and shooting over dogs, and it has convinced me that the one way of bagging game is equally as sporting as the other, always provided that the former is carried out in a legitimate and sportsman-like manner. Many people advocate the use of dogs throughout the entire season, but this is possible only

where birds lie well, such as in grass countries, where I have shot birds, after a black frost, which lay as close as they could have done at the beginning of the season, and in grass birds are not so apt to run as in turnips and other crops.

It is impossible to make it a hard and fast rule to shoot over dogs the whole season through, nor can I allow that shooting over dogs is more sporting than driving; my experience as an old sportsman forbids my so admitting. There are but few places out of Ireland where pointers or setters have any chance after September. If dogs are used, good Clumber-spaniels and small, active retrievers are those which are of most service at such times. The former dogs are valuable in routing-out birds which run to the hedgerows or dry ditches, and the latter in picking up those shot or wounded. Pointers and setters are useless for such work, and are not by any means improved by being so used. To my way of thinking half the interest which attaches to shooting over dogs is lost, unless they are being either trained, or employing the education they have received profitably; and the training which dogs have so carefully undergone is very apt to be marred by any departure from the ordinary routine, and nothing is more detrimental to a bold, high-ranging dog than allowing him to work in hedgerows and such like.

Where, however, dogs are of such a description as to be incapable of being so spoiled, and a long walk for a light bag is not objected to, a few brace of birds may be picked up on some moors, more especially where the ground is undulating and rough and there is good 'lie' for birds in the shape of rocks, juniper-

bushes, etc., but I honestly confess that even in my youthful days, when driving birds was unknown, or at all events but rarely resorted to, keen though I was, I considered the game hardly worth the candle. On moors which are flat, and where it is impossible at times to get up to birds, such wild work plays havoc with a well-bred dog, or a young dog which promises well for the next season, and has about as bad an effect on it as racing would have on a well-mannered hunter. 'Haunt setting' is certain to make dogs wild in a very short time, and teaches them to 'blink' and chase in sheer disgust everything which chances to get up in front of them. I have known some of the very best dogs utterly ruined by being worked too long on wild birds. Having found after some few years of such experience that my dogs were so spoiled, I had to have recourse to the use of trained falcons over wild birds, and was thereby able to shoot with dogs the entire season through, whether on grouse or partridges. I can very strongly recommend anyone desirous of so shooting to adopt this plan, but he will find it necessary to have the assistance of a falconer, and at least a brace of falcons—female peregrines for choice, the male, or 'tiercel,' as it is called, being rather too small a bird to keep grouse in the constant fear which is necessary, or for partridges where there is but little 'lie.' Falconers may, perhaps, condemn me for depraving the truly noble sport of falconry; but, nevertheless, I find the combination of the two sports answer well, and I have enlisted many recruits to the sport of falconry pure and simple by showing them what material aid can be afforded to dogs on wild birds by the use of falcons. Besides which, the

'stoop' of a falcon at an old cock grouse going at the rate of a hundred and fifty miles an hour is certainly worth the going a long way to witness.

But to revert to what I was saying regarding driven birds, where the use of dogs is not possible, it is nearly always possible to organize a drive successfully if the person who has the management of it understands his business.

Driving may be carried out in various ways. Some people prefer the use of different coloured flags, which are carried by the beaters, who wave them in the air ; others use only three flags, one for each flank and one for the centre, and these are only made use of when birds are inclined to fly back towards the line of beaters and away from the 'heading' guns.

The best sport which I have ever had at rocketing birds was obtained by taking my place in the line of beaters where a flag should have been. Guns placed in the line of beaters cannot, on rough, hilly moors, always see the entire line, and are sure every now and again to get some high rocketing shots, because when grouse fly back from the 'heading' guns, being unable to change their flight quickly enough, they generally rise on perceiving the line. Both grouse and black-cock afford the very best sport in the way of rocketing shots ; so also will partridges, if thus driven at the end of the season, and far more difficult shots than any 'heading' gun, carefully hidden, can obtain. The guns who may thus accompany the beaters, and those in the 'butts,' experience two totally different styles of shooting. The former have the advantage of the exercise and the very finest practice at rocketing birds ; the latter, very often numbed with cold, even

in October, have the sport of stopping the flights as they swing over at a terrific pace, and at all sorts of angles. Where the 'butts' are situated low down under a hill, some grand rocketing shots can be got, and such shots are the truest test of shooting, and are generally acknowledged to be the quintessence of such sport.

It irritates me to hear driving condemned; and as I have before remarked, I do not believe that those people who so run it down have ever had any experience of a really well-managed drive on a good moor, and know next to nothing about it. I consider it vastly superior to plodding for hours after a brace of disappointed dogs late in the season. Doubtless there *are* wild shootings where dogs can be used throughout the season with a certain amount of success, but such localities are indeed few and far between, and, as a rule, it is impossible to use dogs late in the season without the assistance of trained falcons.

From this use of falcons, I am glad to say that the eyries in many places have been left unmolested. This very year I have seen more falcons and golden eagles than usual, thanks to our agitation against the mistaken practices of those people who were ignorant of the immense benefit afforded to game by birds of prey, by their killing down of weak stock, and thereby maintaining the balance of the laws of nature.

Years ago I did my utmost to impress on several owners of moors and forests what a mistake it was to permit their keepers to kill these noble birds, but, until recently, I have been but partially successful. Latterly, however, owing to the increasing wildness of

grouse, both in the Highlands and in Yorkshire, the subject has begun to be recognised and better understood; and it is now admitted that the dearth of falcons, eagles, etc., and the over-driving of moors, has been the cause. If all proprietors of shootings would but put a stop to this mistaken destruction of eagles and falcons, they would ere long see the good effects of their prohibition manifest itself, by birds being as easily approachable as in former years, and the use of dogs later in the season more practicable.

It is, believe me, no easy task to convince some people of this fact, especially those who delight in making big bags; but I have nevertheless proved that the preservation of the peregrine falcon is of the very greatest benefit on moors where the birds have been wild, and no artificial method has the same lasting effect, but rather, I may say, the reverse; for a few trials with such inventions as the hawk-kite, etc., not only fail to make the birds lie, but succeed in scaring them off the ground altogether, perhaps for good and all. Indeed, I have known this to be the case when the artificial kite has been used on grouse, partridge, and snipe. On the other hand, when real falcons have been flown over grouse I have seen the birds run out of the heather and feed seven minutes after the falcon has been taken in. It stands to reason that the natural birds of prey can visit every moor, therefore the birds do not fly away from the cover where they are safe, because the falcon only strikes in the air, and they are safer thus lying close than risking a flight to a spot in which they would be no more secure than where they are; but the unnatural appearance of the artificial kite frightens them away for miles,

and the strange apparition is not in the least like a real hawk. Even granting such artificial means to be a success in every way, which they are not, I cannot but condemn their use as being unsportsmanlike.

Let sport be worthy its name, and let us set our faces resolutely against all and everything which savours of, or in any way serves to advance, indiscriminate slaughter. Even battue-shooting, if it is carried out in a legitimate manner, may be a perfectly sportsmanlike proceeding ; but where hundreds of wretched hares and rabbits are surrounded by nets and prevented from escaping, the case is very different ; and I am thankful to say that such malpractices are becoming things of the past, as unworthy of Englishmen and sportsmen.

Nor can anything be more detrimental to game-preserving generally than such a system of shooting : it necessitated an amount of overstocking shootings ; and the farmers, whose crops suffered, were naturally disgusted. Times have been hard enough for them without this additional burthen being laid on their already overweighted shoulders ; and it cannot be wondered at that, in many places where such overstocking was formerly the order of the day, ground game has become scarce. The evil has also come to make itself felt in the hunting-field. Foxes cannot exist without ground game, and where the latter is scarce the poultry-yards must suffer. The result may be imagined, viz., 'Coverts drawn blank.' We are very much dependent on the farmers for our sport, but we cannot expect them to bear the brunt of everything. All this has come about despite numberless letters of warning which

have from time to time appeared in the papers on the subject ; and now the much-dreaded results of inattention to them are apparent. Where the evils of the mistaken Ground Game Act are going to end, I, for one, fail to perceive.

If sport is to be knocked on the head, the manhood of our successors must suffer ; and those of them who are anxious for sport, and can afford to do so, will be forced to seek it abroad.

Woodcock, like snipe, are at their best in November, certainly not earlier. They should be allowed a few days' rest after their arrival, in order to recruit their condition and strength after the fatigue of their long flight, the latter often made against adverse winds.

In some seasons the latter are so heavy that they are utterly unable to contend against them, and in consequence those of them which survive make off to other countries, and never reach the Irish coasts. In seasons which are favourable for their crossing, some good bags may be made in the south and west of Ireland. When the birds are well rested and strong on the wing, they take almost as much shooting as snipe ; and when shooting woodcock in thick coverts, the quicker the gun is on them the better.

I may say that this is about the only bird I know of for which pigeon-shooting over traps is good practice. In our wild Irish coverts there is but little time for steady aim at them, and they require to be shot at once.

Often, after being flushed, woodcock will light in the most extraordinary places outside a covert ; places which would be the very last and most unlikely to expect to find them in.

Woodcock select much the same description of feeding-grounds as do snipe. In fine open weather they will often remain on the moors and open grounds before taking to the woods. I have frequently very sensibly increased the day's bag by waiting for them at springs which I knew them to frequent at twilight, when they came down from the higher ground to feed.

If taken just before they light on the ground, they offer a very difficult shot, as they light so rapidly; and when once they have lighted, it is hopeless to get a shot at them, as if again flushed they invariably, under such circumstances, fly so low as to preclude their being seen clearly enough to offer a shot, and will skim into some hole or corner, and thence run out of danger at an extraordinary pace; so the only chance is to shoot at them as they are about to light, and there is generally time for a quick shot at them; very often it may be when they are high overhead. It is sharp practice, and will take a good shot all he knows to put a bag together in the little twilight which is offered in the dark autumn evenings.

I have noticed that they generally come down from the outside hills, moors, etc., thereby proving that until the colder winter weather sets in they prefer the open country. The first frost, however, drives them to their favourite woods, where there are the most suitable springs. Therefore it is not advisable to beat the woods for cock until after the first hard frost, when a good bag may be reasonably hoped for and expected. The bag, however numerous the birds, must of course depend very much on the capabilities of the gun.

The great thing in woodcock-shooting is to keep

calm and quiet, and not to allow one's nerves to be flurried when a bird is flushed and its appearance hailed with a roar of 'mark cock,' for pleasant to hear though the well-known sound may be, it causes more men to miss than shoot straight. When a youngster, I could generally manage to account fairly well for a woodcock or a snipe, if I were shooting alone; but it took me a long time to learn to shoot even decently when out in company of a crew of noisy beaters; and I invariably found myself breaking every rule the instant I put up my gun to fire; and what with the flutter of the rising bird and the yelling of the excited 'gossoon,' my nerves were somewhat overtaxed for me to make good shooting. If an elephant had risen, the shouting could hardly have been more vociferous. However, nowadays, that style of thing is less common; but in former years it was absolutely impossible to prevent an excited Irish beater shouting at the top of his voice, whether he saw a woodcock or a fox, or indeed anything.

The Irish are a truly sporting people, and when young it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to keep them within bounds, and, strange to say, men who can be as quiet as mice when on a snipe bog, are frequently the most noisy in covert when a woodcock chances to get up near them.

In frosty weather we could generally make fairly sure of a good bag of cock, if they were 'in,' and could nearly always be certain of finding them. As, for instance, they generally frequent the same springs during the daytime in frosty weather, as they do at night when the weather is more open; and where the ground is

soft, as it is under the holly, juniper, and privet bushes, whether in woods, fields, or hedges, they are generally to be found.

I have, when waiting for deer, often watched woodcock feeding, and have been interested in noticing how each bird seems to have its own feeding-ground in covert. I have observed them feeding in twos and threes, quite close to each other, but each bird appeared to have his own particular line of soft marsh; and as soon as this was invaded by a neighbour, the latter was instantly driven off it.

Another curious fact which must, I am sure, have attracted the notice of many sportsmen, is that when woodcock have settled down into their winter-quarters, the trail of more than one bird is never visible about any bush whence a bird may have been flushed. Very occasionally one may get a right and left at woodcock, but unless they have been driven from some other parts of the covert, by having been flushed, it scarcely ever happens that more than one bird rises from exactly the same spot in November. When they have been thus flushed, if they do not light exactly on their own hiding-place, they run and warn their confrères.

As a rule, their usual tactics are to light some distance from their accustomed haunt, and run into it. I have many a time been thus nonplussed; and after having accurately marked a cock down into some holly-hush, he has given me the slip by running round and through it, and getting up on the far side of it.

It is as well when beating for a cock which has been marked down (and I may say that the rule is

equally applicable to all winged game). to always make the beater strike the bush on the side opposite the gun, and to instruct him to show himself also, and to make his presence more visible if possible than the gun.

Birds often skim out of sight from behind a bush in the most marvellous way, even in the open, and frequently succeed in putting the beater between themselves and the gun, and appear to do so in a perfectly intelligent manner. Most people who shoot must have noticed how wild pigeons almost invariably fly out of a tree on the side farthest from the gun, and give a sudden downward dip towards the ground, and again rise out of shot as suddenly; and this intelligence is shown by many other kinds of game, such as deer, hares, rabbits, capercailzie, etc.

It is well to remember when shooting large coverts for cock, as is the case in Ireland where there is little other winged game to be got when covert-shooting, that cock seldom fly more than some thirty or forty yards in frosty weather, and nearly always make for the next soft place where there is some such cover for them as that afforded by holly-bushes, etc. I have frequently, when out alone, or with but one beater only, made a good bag of cock by walking the wood quietly from one soft spot to another; and though we often failed to see the birds when put up, yet by following in the direction of the flights as far as we could judge the latter to be, and knowing where the best springs and soft spots were, we could often stalk to a good stand, and then, putting the beater round where we fancied the bird would most probably

be, if the beater succeeded in drawing its attention away from the gun, a successful flush was generally obtained.

It is therefore a great advantage when shooting a strange covert to secure the services of a beater who knows all the likely haunts; but if this is not practicable, and the sportsman intends to remain in the neighbourhood for some days, and has the opportunity of so doing, he should get a man to beat for him, while he himself mounts to some rising ground, or secures some position whence he can watch and mark the flight of every cock which is flushed; then on the following day, if the weather still continues frosty, and he can secure the services of the same beater, he can beat the wood in precisely the same way; but he must remember to follow out the same routine as exactly as possible; for if the beater chance to beat the bushes the reverse way to that which he did previously, the birds will not take the same line as before.

I have experienced some very good sport by managing as above, with the assistance of another gun, in which case one of us went on well ahead of the other some two hundred yards; so that if there happened to be more birds than usual in the wood, or any of them were wild or lighted again far on, the head-gun was able to secure the forward shots, while the back gun worked all the springs quietly up to him, and the heading gun could also mark those birds which left the wood.

In coverts where there was a superabundance of thick gorse or tangled briars, we generally used retrieving cockers and a steady well-trained pointer, the latter also taught to retrieve. When cock rise in

such coverts, they generally light after making a somewhat small circuit; and it is very difficult to mark them down exactly in such thick growth without the aid of a marker well placed; they are very loath to leave good coverts, and unless scared by being fired at and missed, they generally contrive to run into some impenetrable bush.

I have found markers more necessary for this style of shooting than at any other times; and a man who is used to the work very soon learns the flight of all the cock in the covert; for they will persevere in the same flight day after day, and drop at the same feeding spots. When, however, they are flushed a second time, if much frightened, they will take long flights, and, unlike partridges, the oftener they are flushed the wilder they get. With partridges the reverse is the case, for the latter, after being put up the third time, lie closer every time they are flushed. If a woodcock therefore is not killed at the first or second chance, the odds are considerably in favour of his getting up out of shot at the third time of asking, and he will probably take himself off to 'fresh fields and pastures' unless the feeding-grounds in the neighbourhood are too inferior for him to make use of.

A great number of woodcock breed in the Highlands; and I have observed them from the time they were in the nest until their leaving the country at the end of September. These Scotch birds go to Ireland, Norway, and the English coasts for some two or three months, and return to their breeding grounds in January, and as a rule appear to remain in the open ground until March, when they return to their favourite woods, and lay their eggs in a clay hole, which they

scratch out with their bills and feet ; but as a rule this rough nest is free from any kind of lining.

The eggs are so like the ground in colour that it is very difficult to distinguish them ; and the hen-bird will allow an intruder to walk almost over her, or she will quit the nest long before he approaches. I have never seen a woodcock fly off her nest unless the young were fledged, and at such times the parent birds will carry them away, one by one. Whenever I have found nests with eggs which were in process of being hatched, the hen-bird quietly left the nest by running away, and did not rise until she was some distance from it, evidently endeavouring by this means to conceal its whereabouts. It is a very pretty and interesting sight to witness the old birds carry away their young. If the latter are strong enough, they invariably carry them by holding them with their bill and feet, the feet grasping the bill of the young bird, and these journeys are repeated until all the young brood are safely lodged in another place. I have generally found from three to four young birds in a nest.

CHAPTER IV.

Mode of shooting a small moor—Duty of markers for small moor—Evening shooting—Shepherds to be conciliated and paid for each covey—Likely ground in wet or dry seasons—Water from peat-bogs a source of disease—Grouse disease, bad heather, and impure water—Grouse dying from want of pure water—Drainage of moors—Suggestions for water-supply of moors—Young grouse thrive where pure water is available—Long flights of grouse in search of water—Decimation of broods from bad water-supply—Supply of pure water on moors—How to find grouse under various circumstances—Flight of grouse—Caprice of grouse in stormy weather—Long flights—Grouse resting at mid-day—Evils of shooting in wet weather—Sport in wild weather—Hill-side shooting—Mistake of shooting too early in the day—Time to stop shooting—Shooting-boots—Shooting-clothes—Waterproofing of clothes—Evils of mackintoshes—Rheumatism, etc.—Diet and condition—Drinking and thirst—Remedies for thirst—A shooting luncheon—Effect of spirit drinking on shooting—Wild birds and hard work—Falcons over wild birds—Heavier guns and charges necessary for wild birds—Choke-bores condemned—Use of concentrators—Long shots at wild birds useless—Thinning moor by driving—Good shots to be secured for grouse driving—Swinging gun at wild birds—A family shot—‘Browning’ a covey—A day’s work at wild birds—Evening luck—Varying size and colour of Scotch grouse—‘The fewer the better’—Colour of corn-fed birds—Grouse poached in corn-fields—Anecdote regarding poached grouse—Poachers—Drugging game—Poachers’ nets—Poachers’ dogs—The use of the drag-net—Sceptical keepers—‘A straight tip’—Where the poachers come from—Travelling poachers—Honest keepers—Keepers’ excuses—‘When the cat’s away’—Trip traps, etc.—Sky-line netting—Contraband goods—Too much of a good thing—Value of English keepers as compared with Scotch—Tactics of English keepers when after poachers—A well-managed affair—Local poachers—Scotch black-game sold out of season as foreign.

WHERE a moor is not very large in extent, or where birds are as liable to cross the march at the beginning

as at the end of the season, a few hints as to how to shoot such a moor to the best advantage may not be amiss; though, after August and September, birds nowadays get so wild that it is well-nigh impossible to do anything with them in such shootings.

To commence with, I would recommend that good ranging dogs for the main portion of the day-work should be procured, and one or two very steady pointers for what I may term the 'evening work.'

On the 12th, the worst and most dangerous portion of the moors, *i.e.*, that portion which birds are the more likely to leave and cross over from, should be tried. Let the dogs have the wind, and endeavour to drive the birds towards the centre of the moor.

The game-markers, or keepers, should be ahead of the guns, on the flank, so as to turn the birds in the desired direction. The centre of the ground, into which the birds have been driven, should then be left until towards evening, when a steady pointer should be used. At each 'point' the keeper or marker should endeavour so to study the lie of the birds as not only to mark them, but to try and keep them within the boundary line, and this is not a difficult matter to carry out when the man is up to the work.

After the morning beat and a sufficient number of birds have been driven towards the centre of the moor, if there is good feeding-ground for the birds there, a rest may be called for a time, and this is a good opportunity for luncheon. On resuming work, the best-trained dogs which are available should be used, and every chance should be afforded them by working up wind as much as possible, and the guns should be

careful to walk slowly, and to abstain from talking ; indeed, the most perfect silence should be maintained. If this plan is carried out, a good bag may almost be guaranteed. The chief difficulty rests in the ability of the markers, etc., to keep the birds within the boundary ; and this difficulty is very much increased where the beat is, as is often the case, along the steep side of a mountain. Where practicable, such ground is better beaten 'along' the hill than up and down, as the birds will be more easily visible to the marker during the whole of their flight, and he will also be better able, the first beat being taken along the top of the hill, to keep them down on to the next beat. If, however, it is found, as sometimes happens, that the birds will go over the hill, despite all efforts to the contrary, it is wiser to leave the marker on the high ground, whence he can command a better view of them, and probably be able to turn them down, and to take the lower beats of the hillside first. While the side of the hill is being thus beaten, the coveys which are flushed from time to time should be marked from the top.

It may be observed that when grouse light after being flushed, they never settle down in a straight line at the end of their flight, but invariably turn to the right or left, and many yards away from the main line of their course. On a windy day, even in August, they will travel, after thus turning, from a hundred to some three hundred yards before they settle. If they go away out of sight, the marker may be able to form some idea as to where they have lighted by the line they were on. Where the hills are detached, even on small beats, grouse are so unwilling to leave

them, that they will constantly fly round them and light again on the opposite side, like ptarmigan, and by working round and round the hill in such instances, very good sport may be got.

When large packs have been marked down in August into good feeding-ground for the evening, if they do not all rise when first flushed again, great care should be taken to let the dogs work backwards and forwards carefully, up wind, if possible, as a large number of birds will probably be left which would lie well to the gun, and under such circumstances grouse will lie as closely as young black-game : at no time in the season will they lie closer than they will when thus scattered on the evening feed ; and it will be readily understood how necessary it is that the dog in use should be steady and staunch.

When the men employed as markers are new to the moor, the shepherds can offer very valuable assistance, where they are well disposed (and I have ever made it a rule to secure their good will by giving them half-a-crown per covey). They are generally acquainted with the whereabouts of every pack on the moor, and with their usual lines of flight when flushed, so that it is ever worth while to keep on good terms with them, and to get them to mark down the packs and wounded birds.

Sport, of course, must depend, in a very great measure, upon the weather which prevailed during the breeding-season. When the latter has been wet, the brows of the hills are the most likely places to find the birds, as being the driest and most sheltered position for the young brood. In hot weather, after a dry breeding season, the flats between the hills and

those on the tops are the most likely places, and the 'peat-hags' are also sure ground.

These 'hags' are formed by the peat having been cut out for firing; and I cannot but think that, in dry seasons when there is a scarcity of water, the water which collects in these places is a great source of disease to grouse which frequent them.

Of course, there are many moors where there is always a good supply of water from springs, and in which the little brooks which run along the hill-sides afford a sufficiency.

Bad weather is also well known to be a constant cause of grouse-disease. As a rule disease is most manifest after a large show of birds in a dry season, and I am convinced that the moss-water to which I have referred has very much to do with it in cases where good, pure water is scarce, and the heather is coarse and tough.

I had a small moor for twenty years, and neither I nor my neighbour who owned the one adjoining it, was ever troubled with grouse-disease on these grounds, for the water-supply was ever plentiful and good, even in the very driest seasons. On the other hand, our neighbours' birds suffered considerably. On their moors the water was bad and scarce, and what little there was at times was impregnated with peat. I believe that the bad water was more to blame than the bad weather.

Heather-burning has been carried on as long as I can remember, and there are generally plenty of young shoots, even in the worst seasons and after late frosts; and where there has been no scarcity of nice young heather, and the latter has been first-rate, disease has

been prevalent, and so I have come to the conclusion that whatever causes disease may spring from, it is not the heather which is in fault, unless the burning has been grossly neglected, but the water.

After a splendid hatching-season I have frequently found both young and old birds dead from sheer want of pure water, and their livers diseased from drinking at places where the water was putrid ; and I have seen moors without a drop of pure water on them for miles and miles, and nothing for the birds to drink but the filthy, stagnant green liquid which had here and there collected. Surely, if it is thought worth while to pay such enormous rents for moors, the lairds who let them might go to the very small expense which the cleaning of these peat-hags, etc., would entail ; and it would be an easy matter to supply the moors with pure water by means of pipes laid on from some of the many lochs, which are generally within a distance sufficiently near to admit of such a plan being easily carried out. Flat tanks situated below each other, and feeding each other, could easily be arranged so as to supply every part of the moor with fresh pure water. Tile-pipes open at the top are not only of great service, but are in some instances necessary, where the water is inclined rather to run into the ground than down the burns. Open drains should never be permitted on any moor, for the young broods constantly fall into them, and being too weak to get out, are either drowned or are taken by the weasels and crows and such-like enemies, or, being lost by the parent birds, die a lingering death.

Up to the time they are twelve days old grouse are very tender, but after that period they can be trusted to get on fairly well, provided there is a sufficient

supply of good water. When young they are nearly always well nursed by the parent birds if the water is not too far distant; but this is the period of their life when they suffer most from want of good water. In dry seasons their parents could travel four or five miles to where they could obtain it, and I have known old barren birds go even further afield for it. This, however, is utterly beyond the powers of the young ones, and the old birds, sooner than leave their young broods, prefer to perish with them, and thus thousands of old and young grouse die, the latter soon succumbing, the former after lingering for weeks in an advanced stage of disease. It is at such times that shepherds and others who are on the moors so often pick up grouse which are unable to fly away. Stagnant water has been the cause, and instead of saving the lives of the young and old birds, it but serves to prolong the agony of the latter, sometimes for many weeks.

It ought to be the aim and interest of all owners of shootings to furnish the grouse on their moors with good water, and to spare no expense which may be necessary to do so, when they are aware what sad havoc the drinking of the moss-water causes to the birds on their shootings, which, after all, are dependent in a great measure for their well-being on their owners.

But I must revert to the main line of my subject, which rather had reference to the finding and shooting of grouse, than to their management. It will be well to remember that when a covey of grouse are flushed on the top of a hill, their flight is, generally speaking, much shorter than when flushed on the level plain. I have known birds, even in August, when they are

strong, fly more than half a mile, their first flight, when they have been flushed on flat, even ground. On the other hand, when the ground from which they have been flushed is of the reverse description, they never go very far. Strange to say, when high winds prevail, or before any great change in the weather is about to take place, it becomes impossible to know what grouse will or will not do. They become so capricious that it is absolutely hopeless to endeavour to trust to any rule whatever, and at such times every effort to find them at all is often completely baffled. It is not so much a matter for surprise that grouse should, at times, be somewhat difficult to find during the day, but when this difficulty is experienced towards evening, a very marked change in the weather, and a change, too, for the worse, may be expected. I have been told of grouse flying for miles on such occasions, but only once, in twenty-five years, have I known them fly for more than a mile. Such long flights may be common enough in Yorkshire, but it most certainly is not the case in Inverness.

During the middle of the day grouse rest themselves, and remain huddled together in so small a space that by reason of their not moving for so long there is not a particle of scent, and unless a dog happens by chance to light on them, it is long odds against his otherwise finding them.

When grouse are basking in the sun after dusting themselves, and when they lie in a lump together until feeding-time, a pocket-handkerchief would cover the whole pack. I used to employ these hours either by resting, or else taking the young dogs in hand, on the out-beats along the march, when I was often able to

form some idea of what stock I had for the season without running too far into my beat. The droppings of grouse are often a good guide as to the stock which there may be on the ground.

To shoot grouse in wet weather is very injurious to all parties concerned. It is bad for dogs, bad for birds, to say nothing of one's own self, one's gun and ammunition. In wet weather birds cannot squat, but sit up, and so can see the whole array of men and dogs, and it takes them a long time to forget being disturbed on such occasions. It is hopeless to expect to get anything like sport, for the birds won't run in the wet and get up out of shot. Those which can do so collect together under the lee of hillocks, scaurs, and ravines. It is, as I have said, very unwise to shoot on such days; but if men will go out, unless they possess some considerable experience in the ways and habits of grouse, they may, for all the sport they are likely to get, just as well stay at home.

In boisterous, windy weather, in order to secure grouse, some considerable knowledge as to how to set to work is requisite; for every hole and corner must be tried—wherever shelter offers birds must be sought for; and care must be taken as to how they are approached, for every bird in the pack is sure to be on the look-out. It becomes a matter for careful stalking; nor is it reducing things to too great a nicety when I would recommend the sportsman, on such occasions as these, to pay due regard to the colour of his clothes, for attention to this will serve to allow of his nearer approach to the birds by at least some ten yards. He will have to take advantage of every hollow in the ground, and, advancing from the lower portions, walk

up the sides of the rocks, crevices, etc.—in fact, take every advantage he possibly can of everything which will serve to conceal his approach from the ever-watchful birds. This plan of working up-hill, as described, will enable him to get much nearer the birds. A certain amount of excitement is afforded by this kind of shooting, and it is at all events a by no means unwelcome change after a long spell of hot weather and hard shooting over dogs.

When packs light on the side or at the bottom of a very steep hill, it is the best plan to come at them straight over the top and down at once.

It is a great mistake to begin shooting too early in the morning, before the dew is off the heather. Half-past nine or ten o'clock is quite soon enough to commence operations, unless it is desired to drive the packs off the ground and spoil half or more of a day's shooting. On a hot August day, from half-past nine to twelve o'clock is quite long enough for either men or dogs to work and do justice to themselves, and by that time both the first and second brace of dogs will have had about as much as is good for them. The scent also will begin to fail, and tired dogs will do little or nothing except search about for water. If fresh dogs are uncoupled at that time of day, their energies are only wasted; for, if they are high rangers, they cannot but race past pack after pack when the scent is so failing. Grouse-shooting is hard work, and a few hours' rest is absolutely a necessity.

May I advise anyone who is a novice to the sport to mark and take advice by the following hints before beginning his August grouse-shooting?—viz.: Never to wear new boots or shoes, no matter what material

they may be made of. It is a wise plan to procure them from the man who makes them in the district where his shooting may be situated, and always to have them ready a year before they are taken into wear for shooting, whatever other sport he may require to use them for. If boots or shoes are not well used before the Twelfth arrives, all comfort is at an end, and very possibly all sport too, for some weeks to come, by reason of sore heels. Anything is better than such a state of affairs ; therefore it is far better for anyone living in London, who has not the opportunity of breaking in his own boots, to get someone else to do so for him ; at all events, it is better than to lose all sport and suffer pain. London bootmakers, like some gunmakers, are very often 'all theory and no practice,' and are a curse to their customers. I have ever found the local bootmakers by far the most practical, and the most experienced stalkers I know all get their stalking-shoes from them year after year, and never have to find fault with them, unless it be that they cost but half the price of those made in London.

It is also a somewhat difficult matter to get properly fitted with shooting-clothes. London tailors, as a rule, make their coats far too tight, and in nine cases out of ten, when they are taken into use on the moors, they are utterly useless ; and, no matter how carefully they may receive their instructions, such men will insist on making for appearance rather than comfort. I found remonstrance unavailing with one or two London tailors until I ripped the vile garments up with my knife and sent them back to them. Shooting-clothes require to be large and loose in every way, and the waistcoat-pockets ought to be nearly as large as an

ordinary outside coat-pocket. There must be no chance of any hitch, or of the wearer having to fumble about to find what he requires when he is in a hurry to load quickly ; and all cloth used for shooting purposes should be waterproofed by being soaked in sugar-of-lead, alum, and zinc, or some such preparation, so that, while the rain is prevented from entering, the ventilation is not suppressed.

Nothing seems to induce rheumatism so much as the use of indiarubber coats, or indiarubber put into cloth in any shape or form. Its use is fatal when taking strong exercise. Damp is driven into the very bones themselves by that most terrible of all inventions, the mackintosh. I think I may with good reason congratulate myself on having shown up the evils of wearing garments waterproofed with indiarubber in the sporting papers, and thus, I hope and trust, been the means of saving some few people from contracting rheumatism and the many other complaints which the use of such abominations is so liable to cause. Even when using waders for fishing, it is necessary to turn them down frequently, in order to avoid the chance of contracting sciatica. Fishing is by no means such violent exertion as walking ; yet on the coldest spring day, after half an hour's wading, one's legs get quite wet, not with the water, but with the perspiration which has been checked. (It is ever necessary, when driving home after fishing in waders, to be careful to either make a complete change of one's entire clothing, if such is practicable, or to keep one's waders on and add to one's clothing as much as possible by means of overcoats, rugs, etc. ; and this is equally incumbent during summer weather as in the spring.—ED.)

Many a hunting-man has made himself a martyr to rheumatism and lumbago by wearing a mackintosh. Nowadays, however, there is no excuse for their use, since it is so easy to have any cloth thoroughly water-proofed.

In order to shoot well, one must know how to live, and live regularly. I recommend a real good breakfast of porridge and milk, and nothing more, for the sportsman, if he wishes to shoot straight and be ready for luncheon at one o'clock. Nor should he on any account drink any spirits, or even water, when ascending the hills; for if the day is once so begun, then good-bye to straight shooting. The more a man drinks, the more he wants to drink, and the more he perspires; and the consequence of perspiration increased by drinking water is that the eyes become affected and the sight dimmed, and it becomes impossible to shoot well until the evening. When a man has been for some weeks getting himself into condition for the Twelfth, this advice may not be necessary; but it will take a beginner who is out of working order a good ten days, unless he follows my advice, to get himself really fit. I very much sympathize with those men who have neither the time nor the opportunity necessary to somewhat prepare themselves before the commencement of the season, and it is very much for their benefit that I offer my advice. If they are not in condition, if they but conquer the first temptation to quench their thirst, they will find themselves able to hold their own against many a man who, being otherwise better trained, cannot resist the temptation offered by every spring he sees in the hot August and September mornings. If this advice is

of consequence to grouse-shooters, it is of infinitely greater importance to deer-stalkers, for it requires far clearer vision to shoot with a rifle than with a gun.

Some people suffer dreadfully from thirst : to such I would recommend the use of lime-drops made without any sugar, or a small flask of lime-juice and water, rather more than half of the former being mixed with the latter. These remedies may serve to preserve the mouth moist.

I myself generally find that a blade of fresh tender grass serves the purpose equally well ; I change it from time to time for a fresh one, and it is a much more effectual aid in enabling me to overcome the inducement to drink than any artificial means, such as lime-juice, etc.

' *C'est le premier pas,*' and the first thirst overcome by a little pluck, the rest is plain sailing, for the battle is won, and the moment the top of the hill is reached, and the dogs are uncoupled, the eye is as dry and clear as need be. Cold tea is a capital thing to drink at luncheon, but it should be made without cream or sugar, otherwise a bottle of 'Pilsener' ale, and the proverbial nip of 'Long John,' the latter six years old at the very least, should suffice to put everything straight, and a short smoke before starting again will tend to cast a roseate hue over everything, and make a man happy and contented with himself and the world generally, and he will shoot none the worse for it. Fruit, such as apples, pears, or lemons, etc., is a good substitute for drink, but the more spirits a man drinks the more tired and sleepy he becomes, and anything further than 'just one nip' is bad until after dinner,

when two or three glasses of hot toddy will not be out of place.

It must be borne in mind that I am offering the experience which I have gathered during a period of over forty years, and I am glad to say that I am not only a teetotaler myself when out shooting, but I have induced many of my friends to follow my example, having proved to them that the whisky-flask has ruined more good shots than anything else ever did. Too much smoking spoils the eyesight after a few years, but whisky, no matter how diluted with water, produces a certain kind of stimulus for the time being, and this affords a craving for another drink, and so it goes on until it results in complete exhaustion.

As September draws near to a close the grouse become strong and wild, and bags are but very light as compared with what they were at the beginning of the season, and the labour required to bring but a few brace to book is vastly greater than it has hitherto been ; but though such is the case, both dogs and men are, or should be, better fit to cope with the increased toil demanded of them, and the heat is no longer oppressive. Many of the coveys have packed, and it takes a deal of hard walking to break them up, and twice the amount of ground has to be covered as was necessary in the early part of the season in order to effect this. The flights are long, and there is but little fear of overwalking birds, unless the sportsman possesses a leash of trained falcons, when there will indeed be no reason for him to increase his pace, for the birds will lie better than ever. However, it is but few men who possess or use such aids to shooting, and I will but suppose that the case is that of an ordinary

person who, having taken a moor, and paid a high price for it, is anxious to get all the sport he can, and yet finds his birds well-nigh unapproachable, save by stratagem. Under these conditions, it is necessary to use a heavier gun, and heavier charges of powder, and the same charges of shot as before, but of heavier grain, say No. 4, unchilled for preference. The heavier gun is indispensable, for the reason that heavier charges are requisite, and the weather is often too rough and windy to shoot steadily with a lighter weapon. Birds get so strong and wild that long shots are very much the order of the day, and a toy gun is unavailing. A good honest 7 lb. 12-bore gun, plain cylinder barrels, not choked (I detest choke-bores), is the best description of gun for such work ; and if it is found that the birds are so wild, as to preclude their being killed clean within a reasonable distance, and so get away wounded, there is nothing more effectual than the use of 'concentrators,' of which a supply can be very readily carried in a separate bag, and these will be found powerful enough up to forty-five, fifty, and, if the wind is not high, sixty yards. Grouse require a deal of stopping at this time of year, and their wings are not so easily broken as when they were six weeks younger. I have given such distances as forty-five, fifty, and sixty yards as long shots, but I have no hesitation in saying that, although snipe and such-like birds may be killed at much longer range than this, it is nevertheless a very great mistake to fire at a grouse as far off as sixty yards, unless it has been previously wounded. Even at fifty yards numbers of birds get away wounded, not to be gathered, but left to propagate a wretched brood of good-for-nothing youngsters

the following season. Therefore, the fewer long, chancing shots are fired the better. If birds require to be killed down by reason of their being too numerous, and they cannot be approached without the aid of falcons, and these latter are not available, the best and most humane way to effect this is to procure the assistance of a few good driving shots, and drive them until the required limit is reached, and thus a good show of healthy birds will be secured for the following season.

It is necessary when thus shooting off the overplus birds on a moor by driving, to be careful to secure men who *can* shoot driven birds, for if the services of those who are not really up to the work are requisitioned, an infinitely greater amount of harm than good must result. An unpractised hand at driven birds is certain to do a deal of harm, for he is invariably behind his birds. Now, the result of this is that, as the cock-birds come first in each driven pack, they get off scot-free, and the hens drop in for the shot. A beginner may be somewhat surprised at such a result, but very wisely probably says nothing about it, and goes on still shooting behind every time. It takes no little practice to train such people, but it is a great mistake to carry out such training at the expense of losing hen after hen, and allowing the quarrelsome old cocks to get away untouched. Such work very seriously interferes with the succeeding breeding season. There are some men whom nothing will ever make good shots at driven birds, and though they themselves are fully aware of the fact, they never scruple to go out time after time and play 'Old Harry' with their friend's broods, albeit, though, that friend may never be any the wiser,

the keeper being either away on the drive or well tipped to hold his tongue.

I would again urge a beginner to well consider all I have before remarked regarding the swing of the gun, and ever to remember to swing to a point at which he has mentally calculated the shot from his gun will meet the leading bird, and in so doing to remember the terrific pace at which a driven grouse travels. Let him fire far enough ahead. A grouse travelling at the rate of eighty miles an hour requires plenty of swing and allowance. I may say that the term 'swing' seems to fall somewhat short of what I wish to impress upon the reader; it is insufficient; the pace demands more than mere 'swing' in order to get the charge far enough ahead.

I once saw no fewer than thirteen grouse fall to the two barrels of a young friend of mine whom I was teaching to shoot, and who had till then never even fired at a grouse in his life. I placed him in a hollow, and showed myself to about five hundred grouse on a stubble, sending another person round the birds, and, much to my satisfaction, they flew straight at my pupil in the hollow; he did not see them approaching, but had plenty of time to get in two barrels as they came across his left front; he fired at the leading bird, and, to my surprise, the charge of No. 4 shot committed havoc with a vengeance, for we then marked down thirteen dead, and we saw several which were still going over the neighbouring march which were evidently hard hit, and which must have probably towered and fallen. Altogether, we that day gathered eleven birds, and on the day following one of my retrievers found two more dead birds which we had overlooked.

As it may interest my readers to know what description of gun and charge it was which brought about such wholesale slaughter, I may as well inform them. It was a 12-bore cylinder, made by Dickson, of Edinburgh, in 1880, and the charge was $3\frac{1}{2}$ drams of Curtis and Harvey, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ ounce No. 4 unchilled shot. The amusing part of the performance was that my young friend did not even see the birds coming to him. I shouted to him, 'Cock your gun; they are coming to your left front high over!' and he was therefore just ready, and not being at all nervous by reason of seeing anything unusual, for he had no idea what description of birds were coming and thought they must be rooks, he pulled to orders, and down they came all over the place. I shall never forget his face. He started the next day for India, where I have little doubt he must often have told the story of this, his first and most extraordinary experience of grouse shooting; and should he ever read these lines, he will be still further gratified to know that my dog found the other two the next day.

I have often accidentally, in cross shots, bagged as many as five, six, and even seven birds, nor is such an occurrence at all uncommon when grouse driving, and I once bagged a whole covey of seven birds in two shots, much to the horror of a sporting parson who was out with me; but such accidents must happen now and then, 'when an ill wind blows good to no one.' We all keep our family shots in the dark. I could, if so minded, record a big bag which was made in a couple of shots in Yorkshire, but the less said about such unfortunate occurrences the better.

As far as the shooting of grouse is concerned, I

have but little more to say by way of advice to my pupil, and, I trust, friend, the novice. When birds are wild, it is a good plan to endeavour to drive them during the day towards rough, hilly, or hillocky ground for the evening's work; if such endeavours are successful, and the dogs are steady, some rare good shooting may at times be obtained, especially towards the 'gloaming,' and if the dogs are not of too obtrusive a colour. Birds have a feeling of security in such broken ground, and when a dog points, if he remains staunch, it gives time to cross him, and so obtain command of the pack; but it is necessary to cross well wide of the dog, if possible, and if not, a low hush of caution will serve to keep him staunch while crossing to the spot whence it may be concluded he is winding the birds. In such ground they will be close at hand; if there is no such hiding the chances are they will flush some distance off. But late in the evening birds always appear to be further off than they actually are, and, if in sight at the 'gloaming,' are always within range. I have often, after a day of disappointment after wild birds, having perhaps but one brace to show as the result of a morning's labour, suddenly come upon the driven packs of the morning lying well in such rough ground as I have described, and have bagged as many as forty brace after four o'clock in the evening.

An example of this kind of luck happened to me many years ago, when shooting at Beaufort (Lord Lovat's) on a beat named Bawblany. The late Colonel the Hon. Alastair Fraser (the late Lord Lovat's brother) and I had only succeeded in bagging one young grouse (the only one we saw) up to

luncheon time. The evening was drawing on, and we were giving up all hope of seeing any birds at all, when we suddenly came upon several packs in some rough, hillocky ground, and we succeeded in putting together some forty brace before it got dark. I have frequently experienced similar cases of luck such as this, just at the time that all chance of sport had seemed utterly hopeless.

When a pack gets scattered at this time of day the best plan is to stick to it, for it is a chance which seldom offers in broad daylight late in the season. When grouse are wild and the season is getting late, and there is a dearth of stubbles in the vicinity of the moor, some birds can generally be secured by going out before dusk for an hour or two and working round any hillocks of heather there may be near such stubbles as there are, with one or two steady dogs; but the dogs should be of a dark colour; red or Gordon setters would be the most suitable, and more in keeping with the colour of the ground. The plan to be pursued is to stalk over the rising ground without showing one's self when the dog 'sets,' until actually on the top of the ground, on the far side of which the birds are lying. A good bag may thus often be made in half an hour or so, and I have killed from five to ten brace in that time on such ground just before dusk. A retriever, on such occasions, is indispensable, as without such assistance many birds must be left behind. As a rule, grouse will not shift their ground in rough weather, unless the moor is very flat and wanting in shelter, and they may generally be found in the long heather on the lea side of the hillocks and knolls near to the haunts which they usually

frequent for shelter from the mid-day sun, or from the inclemency of the weather.

The Scotch grouse vary very considerably in size. The Perthshire birds are small in comparison with those of Argyleshire. The Western Highland bird is much larger and of a fine rich red colour, those in Perthshire being darker. Keepers affirm very decidedly that where there are comparatively few birds they are heavier and richer in colour. In other words, the deficiency in quantity is atoned for by the quality, and I have noticed this to be the case everywhere. The birds on the West Coast are invariably fine, because the wet weather which is there so prevalent prevents their ever being too plentiful. In the lower districts, where the birds take to the corn-fields early in the season, they are much lighter in colour. These lower counties of Lanark, Renfrew, and those on the border, supply most of the poached grouse with which the English markets are supplied. Most of them are snared by means of horse-hair or fine wire nooses, and these latter engines of destruction prove very fatal in the corn-fields, and hundreds of birds are annually so trapped and sent to market. I have seen these snares, not by the dozen, but by the half-hundred, set round the edges of corn-fields and heather in Inverness-shire. A friend of mine, a clergyman, told me that a farmer, one of his own parishioners, and whom he knew well, passed him on the road to the market-town driving a hill-pony and cart. The cart was loaded with sacks of potatoes, and it being the end of November, my friend was somewhat surprised to see potatoes being taken in to market so late in the year, all the other crofters having sold their potatoes, as he well knew,

some weeks previously. On meeting the man again on the following day, he asked him how, with his small croft, he had so many potatoes for sale. The crofter replied with a canny 'Toot, toot ! see here !' and he showed my friend a cheque for over £30, which was got for grouse, and *not for potatoes !* These and such-like are, in many places, the means which the wretched crofter is forced to adopt to pay his rent, and it goes on without let or hindrance.

Every description of poaching invention is brought to bear against the unfortunate grouse, though I am pleased to be able to record the fact that the tactics of some of my watchers have many a time been successful in bringing the ruthless perpetrators of such unfair deeds to justice, and made them pay dearly for their night's work. The smallest mark or sign of netting, snaring, pinioning, trapping, holing, drugging, etc., is easily detected. Near large towns pheasants are easily drugged, and I have also heard of some means which poachers make use of in order to stupefy the birds with some kind of vaporous preparation. Such work should, however, be surely found out and prevented, despite the fact of its being so silent and easily carried on, whether the night be dark or clear.

Poachers' nets are of various kinds. What are called 'line-nets' are at times five hundred yards in length. Then there is the 'drag-net,' which is used principally between the 6th and 10th of August—a small, light net, which is pulled *over* the dog when set. These poachers' dogs are collies, and their noses are as true as those of any other breed, and when they have been broken off hares they are invaluable to poachers, whether for day or night work. The drag-net is very

much used during the day-time, when the birds are very easily taken by two men drawing the net down to the covey over the 'set.' The two men keep some distance apart, so as to allow the birds to fly into the net if they do rise. This latter is, however, not often the case; for, as a rule, the birds lie well, from the very fact of being somewhat bewildered by reason of being, so to speak, between three fires—viz., the dog setting them, and the two men wide apart—and they naturally squat close until the men pass them, when, of course, the fine silk or thread net is over them. The number of birds that are taken off well-stocked moors in this manner is simply incredible. The moors generally selected for the purpose are those in the wildest districts, and where there are no watchers put on to help the keepers. These latter individuals, also, are invariably sceptical as to the amount of damage which can be inflicted on a moor with a fine drag-net during the day-time, and with the assistance of a well-trained dog. I have, year after year, seen these 'strangers' arrive, and have informed the keepers of the fact; but they have only laughed at me in their ignorance, and replied: 'Birds won't lie for anyone in the day-time.' I only wish that the remark had been true. The first information I ever received on the subject was from an undoubted source—a shepherd who at one time had been himself in the habit of helping to draw the nets, and who used to be well paid for the assistance he was able to afford in knowing where the packs lay. The nets, as a rule, belong to men who come from the South, and work for the game-dealers in Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, London, etc. They begin to arrive towards the end of July

and the beginning of August, at the larger stations, avoiding the smaller places, where they might attract too much attention and be watched. I have often seen them about the villages, and had little doubt as to what their calling might be, from the appearance of their dogs. You will never see more than one man, accompanied by his dog, at a time. The net is so fine and light that it presents no bulky appearance, and so they roam about from place to place, and, their programme and rendezvous being carefully arranged, and their scouts ever on the watch, they manage to elude detection. Many of them are keepers out of place, who, getting hard up, join in the illegal business; though I must admit that I have known many instances in which such men have resolutely refused to have anything to do with such a nefarious trade, even though they have been well-nigh reduced to starvation, and have given information against their would-be seducers.

It behoves keepers, when they observe any of these suspicious-looking gentry about during July or August, to keep an eye on their movements, for there can be but little doubt as to their intentions. I have frequently noticed them arrive at Inverness and wait for the North train; there was no need to ask where they were going or what their errand—their appearance answered the unasked question sufficiently. Watchers should be put on to assist the keepers towards the end of July; the expense would not be very great, but there would be a very great increase of sport thereby secured, and the complaints regarding the scarcity of game, owing to the depredations of poachers, would be unheard of, whatever evil results

may have been brought about by a wet and cold breeding-season.

I have often been considerably amused at the numberless reasons which keepers bring forward as an excuse for birds being scarce when there should have been a really fine show, a good stock having been left to breed from. Every and any cause but the right one is adduced, though they must many a time have come across the tracks made by stray feet, which cannot be wiped off as easily as a handful of feathers, which latter are often the only tracks which remain to tell the tale after a drag-net has been at work, save where the ground is wet and mossy, and then the footprints of both men and dogs are plainly visible. Such marks are asserted to be those made by the shepherd on his way to some other hill. Whereas, I have been informed that the keepers have actually met the man and his dog; and on asking his business, received ready reply that it was to make a short cut to recover lost sheep, etc., while all the time they were being hoodwinked by our poaching acquaintance, who was working his passage towards his rendezvous.

In wild, out-of-the-way moors, where there is every facility for the keepers being watched till out of sight, these poaching scoundrels wait until the coast is clear, and will then net the ground behind the keeper. Such moors should be well pegged with rough sticks or bushed with briars, or some such protection afforded. It is, also, quite worth while to set such ground with wire trip-traps, which answer admirably, and are not visible in the heather.

The shepherds should join in thus helping the

keepers and in setting the wires, as, in the latter case, they will know where they are placed, and so save themselves many a fall; they, too, know where birds can be most easily taken. These wires should be marked, and all taken up before the 12th of August, when the birds are less likely to be netted, as the high prices will have disappeared, besides which, no day-netting is likely to take place after the shooting-season has commenced, except in the most unprotected localities.

It is not an easy matter to use a drag-net on rough ground at night; but a longer net is used on the flats on dark, windy nights, when tremendous hauls are made, the whereabouts of each pack having been marked down for weeks before. The ruffians know the neighbourhood so well that they find little difficulty in conveying their booty away to the market in light, hill pony-carts, which are able to slip across the country to out-of-the-way stations. Often, too, such contraband goods are smuggled away in the carriers' carts in disguise. In fact, every sort of dodge is resorted to. At times the game is packed up in a box, similar to those used by women, and addressed to some woman, either real or fictitious. This is a very common dodge when it is supposed that there is any likelihood of the attention of the police being attracted at the station.

I once had a cheque sent to me from a game-dealer for some game which had been sent from my own shooting, and which I myself had never either shot or sent away; and at another time I received a bill for the carriage of a heavy hamper of game which had been sent away the previous week from my own

district. This I, of course, declined to pay, and I also returned the cheque to the game-dealer in the South, with a few words of caution. It transpired that he had himself been taken in, and he was eventually the means of showing up a gang of netters who, since then, have changed the scene of their operations; but, nevertheless, night-poaching goes on worse than ever.

As a rule, an English keeper is worth half a dozen Scotch at detecting night-poaching. The Highland keepers go about together, and are generally humbugged by the poachers' scouts; but the English keeper acts in a more scientific way, and is able to cope with the science of the poacher.

An English gamekeeper walks as noiselessly as any poacher, and no two of them ever get together unless some preconcerted signal, such as the hoot of an owl, is passed between them. In a big affair, where all the keepers are on the watch, it is a good plan to fire a rocket in the direction towards which the poachers are making, as the men who are on the watch in that portion of the ground are then able to unite together and to meet them, and at the same time one or two rockets may be fired in the direction in which it is desired that the other keepers should follow. However, the more quietly matters can be carried out the better, for a noisy signal often gives the poachers time to separate; whereas, by quiet measures being adopted, the whole gang may often be surrounded and taken. I can remember an instance where seven men were at work poaching, and they separated on being discovered, and ran for their lives; the keepers, however, had been so well placed at all

the likely passes that every keeper tackled his man, and the whole lot of them were taken. This occurrence took place some years ago on the Countess of Seafield's estate; the head-keeper then, as now, being Mr. Templeton, and one of the brilliant exceptions to the majority of Scotch keepers. True, there are plenty of hill-keepers who are excellent at hill-work; but when it comes to night-netting, which is generally carried on in the low grounds, and goes on more or less throughout the season, they are unable to cope with it. Hill-netting does not pay after birds get wild, unless poachers use the expensive, long sky-line nets, when of course the wilder the birds are, the better for their purpose. There are a great number of local poachers who can do a deal of harm in a very scientific manner with the use of common garden fruit-nets, and they have committed sad havoc in several districts during the last five or six years. It is utterly useless to expect a keeper to take these gangs without help, for the poachers know the ground far better than the keepers, and can run him out of sight in no time, besides which, some of these local men are the most desperate characters to be met with anywhere. I had the good luck to catch some of them; and I learnt a good deal more than it is possible to refer to in these pages. The system of netting as carried on in the low grounds for every kind of game is most destructive, and ere long every Highland village will possess its gang of netters; for the trade is a paying one, and the steadier the hands so employed, the more successful the raid is, and the more easily the game is distributed to the different stations for transmission to the southern dealers.

I regret to find that black-game are sent both to Glasgow and Dublin as foreign game, when they are really out of season; and I have little doubt that partridges also find their way there when they are protected by law.

Some years ago I wrote to the editors of some of the sporting papers, informing them of this fact; but it is a difficult matter to make people believe that a keeper can ever be such a useless appendage to a shooting. Nevertheless, I have often been aware that at the very time when the keeper has been snoring in bed, afraid to show his whiskified face outside of his door, the poachers' scouts were keeping guard outside; and night after night the nets were doing their work on the property of my neighbour, who refused to believe me for years, though eventually he was forced to do so, at his cost.

CHAPTER V.

Shooting small moors—Wildness of grouse progressive—Wildness of grouse due to undue destruction of hawks—Overstocked moors—Shooting *v.* sheep-farming—Value of moors when let for shooting—Heather-burning—Sheep *v.* grouse—Old heather a cause of disease—Black-game shooting—Driving for black-game—Curiosity of black-game—Black-game and roe-deer—Good stags—Danger from stags when breaking covert—Shooting-cloth and where to get it—Shooting over dogs—Sport *v.* slaughter—Bastard sport—Scotch shooting in 1858 ‘sport’—Scotch shooting in 1862 ‘slaughter’—Good dogs badly handled—System of breaking adopted by Scotch keepers—Trained dogs—The silent system—Author’s pointers—Foxhound blood in pointers—Use of the check-cord—Training to hand—Checking and quartering—Hand-working—Breaking off fur—Dogs, when at lessons, to be kept hungry—Results of severe checking—Shy dogs—Use of biscuits when breaking dogs—Meat for pointers and setters not advisable—Restoring confidence in over-checked dog—Breaking to gun—Catching young birds by hand for dog—Shyness of over-bred dogs—Dogs easily trained—Jealousy of dogs—Value of jealousy in dogs—Author’s dog Bosco—Young pointers and setters should be ‘walked’—Want of dash in dogs—Training of nervous dogs—Evils of firing too close to nervous dogs—Accident to dog belonging to author—Pointers ‘at walk’—Care necessary in selection of farmers to take puppies ‘at walk’—Running riot on ground game—Liberty allowed to spaniels ‘at walk’—Management of young retrievers—Value of ‘walking’ young setters—Use of whip condemned—Punishment for refractory dogs—Dogs more easily trained on grouse than on partridges—Author’s Laverack setters.

UNLESS a moor is small and surrounded by well-stocked shootings, it should not be shot oftener than three days a fortnight; under such circumstances, however, great liberties may be taken with it without

detriment, inasmuch as, if the birds belonging to it are well broken up, fresh birds will visit it daily.

It is necessary in such small shootings that the heather-burning should be carried out judiciously, so as to ensure there being plenty of young heather as well as long covert for shelter, and good water should be provided if such is wanting.

In Inverness, Perth, and other Scotch counties, the grouse are yearly becoming wilder, and—save in Caithness, where they still lie well for the greater part of the season—they will ere long be as wild as their Yorkshire cousins; the only hope for their not becoming so being that the Scotch moors are not so bare and flat as the Yorkshire, where the guns are more easily visible to the birds. Scotland can also boast of scenery, which is absent on the Yorkshire moors; and so there is somewhat more pleasure to be derived from shooting on the former than the mere killing of game, even though the use of dogs may have to be abandoned early in the season.

When I was young, dogs were in general use both in Yorkshire and Derbyshire; so that it is evident that the wildness of grouse has increased since those days. It is my opinion that it is only a question of time for grouse to become equally wild everywhere, and this is, I am convinced, due to a disregard of the preservation of the balance of nature, so far as it applies to the extermination of birds of prey; a certain amount of so-called vermin being absolutely necessary to the well-being of game, and wherever the birds of prey have been interfered with, overcrowding and consequent disease has ensued, both amongst the winged and also the ground game;

moreover, as I have before endeavoured to explain, the birds have got so wild that driving has had to be resorted to. Even in Caithness, the district least of all so affected, the grouse in some places have become over-wild and unapproachable. In Strathmore they have also had to take to driving, and ere long this must be the case everywhere; and birds may fly for many miles now without fear of peregrines, thanks to the ignorance of those who should have been better informed.

The use of dogs for 'setting' purposes is therefore fast declining, and will ere long be altogether abandoned, except in a few isolated instances. The increased number of tourists, railroads, etc., has also done much of late years towards disturbing the formerly otherwise quiet districts; civilization is ever antagonistic to sport. It is to be regretted that such is the case, but still more so that the custom of indiscriminate slaughter is so rife. Overstocked ground, game herded together—all these things tend to spoil sport in the future.

Warning seems useless; the best of our shootings have been turned again into sheep-farms, and this will never answer on the high grounds. Sheep will never pay on such grounds; even the hardiest Highland cattle fail to thrive; deer alone succeed. If the land were given them rent-free, the crofters and sheep-farmers could not make it pay. Then, again, the tremendous competition from abroad prohibits any sensible profit. The ground leased for shooting becomes really valuable; and it will be far better for all concerned if the lairds increase the shootings and reduce the sheep-farms on such high grounds as I

have referred to. There will, too, be increased employment; more gillies will be required, etc., and consequently more money expended, and to be earned, than can be obtained off a whole mountain which a couple of shepherds and their dogs can farm. Then, again, for at least six months in the year, every shooting-lodge will require a staff of assistants, both young and old. Forest land is useless for anything but grazing; and it has been known for years that nothing pays on it save deer and grouse; therefore, the more numerous the shootings, the more people will be in a position to obtain good wages, which will enable them and their families to live comfortably through the winter. Agitators, 'the curse of the period,' endeavour to prove that the case is not so, thereby seeking to feather their own nests at the expense of the Highland crofter.

When it is necessary to burn heather, the keepers should be entrusted with the sole control of the operation, and no shepherd should ever be allowed to interfere. I have known cases where the best portion of the cover on moors has been destroyed through careless burning, in high wind, of some of the best of our moors in Perth and Inverness.

If the stock of sheep kept on a hill is no larger than such ground can well support, they will do no harm to the grouse; but where the stock is excessive, the young heather must suffer in consequence. If a keeper is worth anything, he should be able to at once report if the feeding for the grouse is suffering. Grouse object to eat old heather if they can procure the young shoots; nor can they be blamed for it, since the old heather is fatal to them. Artificial manures, and washing of sheep

down the burns, I have little doubt, all tend to militate against the well-being of grouse.

Blackcock offer but little or no sport until they are fully fledged in October or November. In fact, one might as well shoot at a barn-door fowl for all the sport which such shooting affords before the birds are full-grown and strong, and then they are handsome, and worthy of some trouble being taken to secure them ; and no bird, when fully matured, takes much more stopping than a blackcock. There are numberless means of approaching wild grouse or partridges ; but a November blackcock is as wary as a curlew, and they are not easily driven unless the lie of the ground happens to suit their line of flight, which is generally along the burns to the birch-woods, when they are driven off the hills. When driving them, the best position for the guns is in any hollows there may be in their line of flight when making for the birch-woods ; but not too near the coverts, as a second or even a third drive may be obtained at times, if the guns are placed well outside the wood in the open. After the first beat, the guns should be placed in or outside the wood, according to the size and shape of the latter, and as quietly as possible, and the beaters should drive from the far end first, and put the birds back over the guns, which should be placed, where practicable, in a pass about the middle of the wood, so as to leave a third beat, viz., the near half, which can be taken back again to the farthest end. Should the birds light again at this end, they can be again driven as before, if the guns are not too much exposed. By this means a good bag may often be put together.

I have often, when shooting alone, come across black-game in the open ; and often succeeded in obtaining a stalk on rough ground, especially if there chanced to be a few fir-trees about.

They are very inquisitive birds when they see anything strange, and, like reindeer, their attention can be attracted for some time by a flag, etc. ; and, after the fashion of reindeer-hunters, I have often secured an easy stalk at them by sticking a flag or a handkerchief on a stick in the ground where the birds first saw me, and then, walking backwards until out of sight, managed to get up to the birds, whose attention was still fixed on the flag, which latter should be red for choice ; and by making use of the inequalities of the ground, I generally managed to get a brace at each stalk. When on the tops of the Scotch fir-trees, it is comparatively easy to attract the attention of blackcock, and to fix it so as to get round them.

I used to find the stalking of black-game and roedeer just as exciting as deer-stalking, unless after an exceptionally good stag. It is a welcome change after the monotony of shooting grouse ; and it requires even more care than deer-stalking, for both roedeer and blackcock can see twice as well as deer, besides possessing the power of scenting danger in an equal degree. Their being so much smaller in size, also, makes it more difficult to see them, particularly if the former are lying in the heather and the latter are on the ground. I have had much more trying stalks after good roedeer bucks, which are the most knowing old fellows, than I ever had after a stag, except in one instance. The latter are readily circum-

vented nowadays. The crosses are easily got if they keep out of thick coverts, and if in these they will not break forward; but when really good stags, they always break back at any cost when the covert is beaten.

If watched at early morning they can be easily stalked outside such woods. Once they are in the latter, they are safe for the day, and nothing short of a pack of hounds will get them out again.

I have seen beaters knocked clean over, and have heard of people being seriously injured, so much so as to cause their death, by such deer breaking back and inflicting a kick or a severe blow when breasting anything which chanced to be in their way. I once shot a hind, as she was coming straight back on to me, with a charge of No. 6 shot, and she rolled over like a rabbit. She was breaking back on a line of black-coated beaters, and the chances are that she would have knocked me over, as she could not see me in the covert of young fir and heather, and the cloth I use for my shooting-clothes is exactly the colour required for stalking such ground. If any of my readers are desirous of obtaining it, they can do so from Mr. Holt, of Sackville Street, London. It is as good as any cloth I know for such purposes, and is invisible on most moors. It is made in both light and heavy qualities. Mr. Robert Fraser, of Inverness, and other tailors in the North, also have it.

I am most anxious to impress upon the reader that, although I have enlarged so much on the pleasures of driving game, I do not wish it to be supposed that I do not appreciate most fully the very great pleasure afforded by shooting over dogs. Indeed, I have

endeavoured already, in one or two instances, to emphasize the attractions which the latter style of shooting possesses, but when, from various causes, it cannot be satisfactorily carried on, driving is a necessity, and a welcome change to a style of shooting which, despite its many attractions, must, as all other things, after a time become somewhat monotonous work. I regret to say that with many people nowadays the love of dogs is becoming a thing of the past. Some friends of mine, who own large shootings, shoot with but the one object, viz., that of making a large bag; and, as everyone must be aware, when this is the case there is no time to take much interest in the working of the dogs. When one couple are done with another are ordered out, and thus the guns are kept at work banging away, without a moment's time being afforded to admire either dogs, scenery or anything else. Dogs! dear Simon Scrope, it's years since we heard of you and your ways! and well it is you are not now here to see!

Battue-shooting may be made a truly bastard sport, fit only for those who lack the stamina to undergo the toil of a day of real work. If such can be called legitimate sport, viz., to shoot for the sake of out-scoring some neighbouring 'feather merchant' doing trade on a large scale, then give me the sport which consists in pursuing the birds and beasts which Nature has given me for use, and which afford me the opportunity of testing my skill; better to capture them with nets at once, than degrade a national pastime by indiscriminate slaughter.

When I first visited Scotland in 1858 we shot in a legitimate fashion, and over dogs; and such dogs as

they were, too ! and what is grouse shooting without dogs, and the interest they afford in their breeding and training ? In 1862 I was asked to form one of a party to *kill* grouse, solely for the sake of killing them, and nothing else. The dogs, it is true, were there, and in numbers, for the kennels boasted of no fewer than twenty-seven of them ; but I shall never forget the way in which they were broken in. As a friend remarked to me, ‘Are we driving sheep, or are we being fooled ?’ ‘The latter,’ I replied, much crest-fallen. I had shot grouse over these dogs often enough by myself, but as luck would have it, my friend and I were asked to go out together and pass our opinion on the best dogs in the kennel. It was in October, and the birds were a bit wild ; but as soon as ever they got a chance of lying, and the dogs came to a long point, all hope of getting near them was ruined by the keeper yelling out the now exploded ‘To ho!’ loud enough to be heard a mile off. I don’t think I was ever more vexed in my life, for I was endeavouring to show the best breed of setters in Scotland to a judge whom I had told they were so good that it was worth giving up a few days’ cub-hunting to get a day over them. My language at every fresh exhibition may not have been expressed in very loud tones, but I fear it consigned the keeper, in the first letters of his own words, to a hotter place than ‘To ho.’ Anyone who has ever experienced the awful trial it is to go out under such circumstances with another man’s keeper, and see him so disgrace himself and ruin good dogs, can form some idea of what my feelings were on that occasion. My friend, whom I had driven a long way to witness this exhibition, is a well-known horse

show judge, and also kept the best-known pointers. It was with regret that we were forced to acknowledge that the Scotch keeper is not, as a rule, a good dog-trainer, and when birds are wild it is far preferable to take the dogs and leave him behind.

The system Scotch keepers adopt all through the season is one which I should never dream of using, save when breaking in puppies, by firing a pistol and shouting to them what they are expected to do. When once they have been trained to work to hand I never again make use of any sound. No whistle or call of any kind is necessary, and when a dog chances to become deaf he is still as good as ever. In the case above quoted, the keeper, the head keeper too, was making use of the very means most objectionable even with a seven months' old puppy, with old, trained dogs and wild birds. All day long it was 'To ho!' 'Steady!' and the whistle going perpetually; the natural result being that the unfortunate dogs were forced to content themselves with haunt-setting the entire day. Birds got up hundreds of yards in front of them, and such a miserable exhibition followed that we were thoroughly glad when the day came to an end.

Trained dogs are a *sine quâ non* if grouse-shooting is to be a pleasure, and the best method of training them is doubtless the silent one, and between the latter and the ordinary noisy whistling and 'to ho-ing' there is no comparison. At the same time, I am bound to confess to having failed in many instances to get dogs to keep their attention fixed on the man working them. I have always found it necessary to procure the very best dogs, and my experience goes

to prove that pointers are far more easily trained on the quiet system than setters. The most perfect lot of dogs I ever owned were from a pointer cross of the late Lord Lurgan's, a breed of very great intelligence, and double-nosed pointers of Colonel Johnstone's, and my own. These dogs excelled in intelligence from being taught to think, and to watch their worker's hand. In nine cases out of ten I found the red setters a failure, but it was just the reverse with these dogs. There was a good deal of foxhound blood in the strain, and this doubtless substantially aided the scenting power and readiness to submission.

I generally tried to secure a slight admixture of bloodhound cross, but I did not find it as necessary as when breeding harriers or foxhounds. A dog should be trained by being kept on the check-cord until broken to look back from each and every quarter made, when it should look at its worker for a signal before returning across the next beat. This most useful system should be commenced when the pup is seven months old, and after a time it will take to scenting the birds, and eventually to hunting them up. Now and again the dog is cautioned by the words, 'Here! here!' and at the same time the white-gloved hand of the trainer should be held up, and the dog should instantly drop. After a few lessons he will learn to know what is expected of him. It is as well to always carry a few pieces of biscuit, so as to feed the young dog when it has dropped with its attention fixed on its trainer.

At first the check-cord should be short—from twelve to fifteen yards—and after the dog has learned to drop to the word 'Ho!' and to look round, the cord should be used to check his rushing when quartering, just as

he is about to return on his beat, and after a few such checks he will stop in his turn and look for the white glove or handkerchief, which, if he is to be kept on quartering back, should be waved, and not held steady overhead, the white hand being waved in the direction in which he is required to range. If required to come to heel, the hand is waved towards the ground.

The other instruction, such as dropping to shot, and when birds rise, etc., is easily imparted after these first lessons are completed. The dog should be taught to do everything required by a wave of the hand—whether to come in to heel, or turn in his quartering, all should be done on the silent system; and no matter what description of game may get up, he should learn to drop instantly. I always trained my setters off hares and rabbits, and they would pay no more attention to them than if they were sheep. On some hills Alpine hares are a nuisance; in such cases it is an easy matter to employ a brace of steady pointers to pick up such ground-game as may be required, and so avoid spoiling bold, high-ranging setters. It is a pleasing sight to watch setters in their quartering, disdaining ground-game as they would so much cattle. With but some few exceptions I was generally successful in breaking dogs off ground-game, if they were not too old and had not been previously spoiled too much. A good, sharp pull at the check-cord, when a dog is inclined to run fur, generally sends him head-over-heels, and effectually restrains his energies in that direction.

When receiving their lessons dogs should invariably be unfed previously; they are then keener to learn,

and more appreciative of the biscuit which may from time to time be given them for doing well. Dogs should be trained off ground-game, if possible, before they are shown birds, as when they are brought out on to the grouse-ground, when this has been previously carried out, their training is more than half accomplished. In cases where it has been necessary to check dogs off hares severely, it often takes some little time to get them up to birds, and they require to be coaxed and made much of; but many dogs are steady on birds from the first. I have had several dogs which were naturally as staunch as they could be, but which, from having necessarily been severely checked on ground-game, would from sheer nervousness blink their point and come in to heel. Some very beautiful Laverack bitches I once had never quite got over the habit they had thus acquired, and the very fact of birds rising suddenly near them often made them run in to heel; and I experienced the same with some pointers I had, which were at first inclined to be gun-shy, but I managed to cure them by feeding them with biscuit. Some people use meat for the purpose, but though it is essential for training retrievers and falcons, I always consider it to be a very unwise thing to give meat to dogs, which have been so carefully trained off ground-game. I have known cases where dogs which have been fed on mutton have become inveterate sheep-slayers, and these dogs were unfortunately the very best pointers I ever owned. They had been 'walked' as puppies, and in spite of all the instructions which I was careful to give to the contrary, were fed on everything and anything in the farmer's household. I consider that

dogs which are fed on biscuits and such-like food are more easily broken off fur than if fed on meat.

A dog which is naturally nervous, or which has become so by being over-checked, must, as I say, be encouraged and led up to his birds—right up to the covey of young grouse—and allowed to sniff and ‘set’ as much as possible, and a young bird, where practicable, may be hand-caught and let fly. The dog should be made much of, and encouraged, and fed with biscuit, and not taken on to the next bird until he has had time to compose his nerves and think over what he is wanted to do. When dogs have not been broken to the gun before they are shown birds, it is a wise plan to get some assistant to fire off a pistol when the young bird flies away. If the dog has never been frightened by being flogged or by having a whip cracked at him, he will not mind the pistol. When I owned trained falcons I never experienced any difficulty in catching even full-grown grouse and partridges; and, indeed, have often, without the aid of falcons, taken them with the hand from under the nose of a dog. When black-game and grouse are close set they are very easily caught; and when the dogs are worked over them without any noise whatever, they often sit closely.

I have never experienced much trouble in curing dogs of shyness, unless they have been very highly bred or too much inbred. I do not think I could reckon at any time one shy dog out of ten of those which I bred myself; but I experienced a great deal of trouble at times with those I purchased, and which were supposed to have been properly trained, and in two cases there was no cure for them but sudden

death, though I had given high prices for them. Those puppies we trained ourselves never gave much trouble, and nearly always turned out satisfactory. Save where they were very highly bred, I have found it easier to train dogs than any other animal, and in the hands of a competent and good-tempered trainer, they are most singularly apt to learn. Of course, there are some very little difficulties which require to be overcome, as, for instance, jealousy. When two brothers are working together; and in one or two instances I never quite succeeded in getting such dogs to work well together, and have therefore been forced to part them and work them with other dogs not related to them, and then they would work to perfection. All the same, jealousy is useful at times in serving to rouse up dogs which are inclined to be lazy, and which would blink their point. A good dog-trainer is well aware of the value of jealousy in many instances, especially in completing the training of some dogs. I once possessed some pointers which were jealous and over-anxious to have the first point: when the training of these dogs was completed, they were priced by one of our best judges as being worth a hundred pounds a-piece. I worked one of them for eight seasons, and after he had been working for five years he became stone-deaf; but to the last he worked just as well as if he had heard every order given to him. Now, if this dog (Bosco) had not been trained on the silent system, he would have been useless for all shooting purposes, and I should have been forced to either give him away or keep him as a stud dog. As it was, he lasted me for three years longer, and was invaluable, even though so deaf. He was not

only perfect as a pointer, but he was one of the very best retrievers I ever owned or ever saw; and when covert-shooting on a bad-scenting day, no retriever could equal him. He was the most jealous dog I ever had, not only when working in company, but if he chanced to be sent out to work for a stranger, he would race up every covey for miles and never come near the gun. When working for me, after his first month's work, he never made a single mistake. I have known many a rare good pointer, but I never came across one to equal him.

I always found that the great secret in producing bold dogs was to put them out to walk as pups with the same sporting tenants who took my hounds and pointers, and to let them have a free run and unlimited liberty. If dogs are so treated, and not left too long under such conditions, their very wildness becomes a valuable quality, and is a sign of mettle, and is easily subdued. Puppies which have no dash of wildness about them at seven months old, after being thus allowed a free run, are invariably more difficult to train than a high-couraged dog, and are frequently timid, nervous animals, which can hardly be induced to stand up to birds if there is any sudden noise, and are very apt to become gun-shy. When young dogs are nervous and ready to bolt at any noise, they require to be very carefully treated, and should be taken out every day on a slip, into a town, to the railway-station, a few short trips in the train, anywhere where they can get used to sounds and sights which they fear, and carefully watched all the time, so that when they show any signs of fear they can at once be petted and fed with a piece of biscuit. It is also a good plan when

being fed in their own kennel, but never in a strange kennel, to slap two pieces of board together when they are feeding. It should be done gently at first, and louder and more frequently by degrees. This is a well-known cure for nervous dogs, and I know of none better. When in the company of the other dogs in their own kennel they are less apt to be nervous than when alone or in a strange place, and they can soon be made accustomed to every sound which it is necessary to train them to, and which they are likely to hear when out on the hills, etc.

I have often known cases where dogs have been utterly ruined, when naturally at all nervous, by the gun being fired too close to them, and it is indiscretion which none but a young and inexperienced sportsman would be guilty of. I always made it a rule never to use nervous dogs when shooting with strangers for this reason ; and I can only remember one instance of a dog of my own being spoiled in this manner, and I myself was the transgressor, though it was the most curious piece of bad luck. I had shot at a grouse, the dog, when I last saw him, being staunch on his point in a hollow in the corrie ; but in order to get better to him I had to move round a hillock before I regained sight of him. The dog was a young one, and when he saw me going away from the point to get round him, he must, I fancy, have moved quietly to meet me, for in going round the back of the hillock I kicked up a single old cock, which had run from the covey, and fired at it, as I supposed, well over the hillock, although he was flying towards the corrie in which the birds were well down. Just as I fired, to my horror, the dog appeared on the top of the hillock, when all the time I

believed him to be setting the birds in the corrie below me. The bird fell, and the dog howled, and no wonder, poor brute, for he was in a dead line with my shot. Fortunately, however, and to my delight, I found one grain only had struck him in the point of the shoulder, but it had the effect of spoiling a splendid, high-couraged dog, and though I worked him for years afterwards, he generally blinked his point unless I happened to be near enough to him to speak to him. This dog was brother to Bosco, out of a former litter, and a magnificent goer. Their dam was provided for me by Mr. James Galway, who trained the well-known Waterloo Cup winner, Master Magrath, for Lord Lurgan, and no better judge of either a greyhound or pointer ever lived. Two pups out of every litter were first-rate, but some of the others fairly good only. They were a rare breed of old-fashioned, double-nosed pointers.

I always kept my pointers 'at walk' until they were five months old with the farmers, who took care that they never saw or scented 'fur,' and, indeed, on the farms where I 'walked' my pointers and hounds there was very little 'fur' to be found, though plenty of partridges. The poachers had taken care of the 'fur,' but in those days they had not learned how to net birds in those districts. However, things are different now, and netting and bird-snaring is carried on in the most wholesale and scientific manner.

It is most unwise to place pups out 'at walk' with a farmer who is a 'muff,' and does not understand the absolute ruin it is to young dogs to allow them to run riot on hares, etc. With fox or stag hounds the case is different, and it does them more good than harm; but

with setters or pointers it has a most injurious effect, and it becomes a very difficult matter to break them off the scent of hares, although it is comparatively easy to break them off chase ; but when once they get a taste for the seductive scent of a hare it is rarely ever forgotten, and they get into the habit of false setting on the runs of hares and rabbits, which is an intolerable nuisance where ground game is plentiful. Only a trainer is aware what heart-breaking work it is to induce a young dog to forget the scent of a hare. It is, therefore, infinitely wiser to keep puppies at home rather than to run the risk of sending them to a careless farmer, or to a place where there is much ground game. In order to break dogs off ground game they must be broken where such game exists, but it is necessary to be on the spot the moment the young dog finds it for the first time.

Spaniels may be allowed greater liberty in the above respect, since it is their business to become acquainted with the scent of hares and rabbits quite as much as with that of birds, and they can be easily broken-in to hand.

Retrievers should never be allowed out of sight of their owner or trainer. They require constant exercise to keep them in health, but such should be given them at home, and they should never be allowed out 'at walk.'

Many of my setters would have been useless if I had not allowed them a good wild run 'at walk' for a time, and have turned out shy, blinking animals. When a pup has by chance contracted some bad habit 'at walk,' he often turns out all the better for having 'run riot' a bit, when he is afterwards put to hand work ;

but I never make use of a whip on such occasions. The most sensible and the severest punishment one can inflict on a dog is to fasten him up by the collar to a walking-stick fixed firmly into the ground, and to walk away from him out of sight. He imagines he is going to be left there for good and all, and if he is a sensible and intelligent dog he is sure to guess, after a few such lessons, why he has been so left to meditate on his shortcomings. The same system may advantageously be adopted with horses, falcons, or indeed any animal it is desired to train.

It is far more easy to train dogs on grouse than on partridges. A young dog will romp over grass or stubble, stopping as if he were shot when he comes on the scent of birds; but it is an altogether different matter to get dogs to work carefully in turnips or other thick cover. The scent is less defined, and more careful training is therefore requisite. I have myself owned dogs which nothing could outstrip on a moor—perfect demons to go—both setters and pointers, but if put into turnips they were at once conscious of the difficulty of the work. The most beautiful work I ever saw done by dogs was with a pair of Laverack setters; strange to say, own brothers. When in turnips they never seemed to lose sight of each other, though gliding swiftly through the cover, and the instant one got the scent both dropped, and it was at times a somewhat difficult matter to find them if the cover was at all high. When one dog found birds he immediately dropped until the gun came up to them, when both lay flat and there remained until every bird was shot; or if working up to birds they both crawled like serpents when there were very many, and no

power on earth would induce them to spring a bird. I bought these dogs ready broken, having been told by the keeper who trained them how good they were. I got the brace for twenty-five guineas, and they turned out worth a hundred and fifty, at the lowest computation. The keeper came into my service about that time and worked them to perfection, but they required no help from me, and I never owned any dogs which were more speedy, and yet thoroughly steady, on grouse, or which could glide through turnips as they could. I have often seen them turn over on a turnip when coming suddenly to a side point; they were wonderfully swift and yet silent in their movements. It was often a matter of surprise to me, how they managed to move so fast through turnips and yet to lift their feet so stealthily as to make no noise at all; now and then a turnip might turn up, or a leaf be sent flying, but there was no rough and tumble, heavy, clodding going, and I have known a couple of hares when running across turnips make infinitely more noise. It was a sight to be remembered to watch them when roading partridges in a grass field, which would not lie, but ran to the end of the cover all over the field. When partridges so behave they are almost sure to rise out of shot over the hedge. I could generally tell what to expect by the pace these dogs tried to work on the guns, and the instant the latter came up to them they would road after the birds rapidly but surely, and without ever running any risk of springing them.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Teasdale-Buckell—Mr. Llewellyn's setters—Challenge given to Lord Lovat—Advantages of the silent system—Treatment of nervous dogs—Sagacity of pointers—Development of sagacity in pointers and setters—Evils of Scotch Hill-Kennels—Management of dogs by keepers—Individual sagacity—Terrier as setter—Collies as retrievers—'Chacun à son goût'—Irish water-spaniels—Sagacity of collies and setters—Valuable dogs at times underestimated—Terrier and collie—Fast retrievers and bad shots—Slow, steady retrievers requisite for wild fowl—Sagacity of a deer-hound—Mustard and Pepper—Homing instinct of Hill-ponies—Homing instinct of falcons—Purchase of dogs, and their trial before purchase—'Beauty skin-deep'—Nose-power—Pace and staying-power—Test of nose-power—Superiority of nose-power in pointers—Setters in hot weather—Pointers on spread birds—Points of dogs—Pointers *vs.* setters—Dog-dealers—Trial of dogs before purchase—Dealers' dogs—Training of dogs by their owners—Dogs in the field—Running in, and the use of the thrash-cord—Picking up birds—Evils of flogging dogs—High-mettled dogs—Punishment—Improper training—Young dogs 'backing'—Breeding from pedigree dogs—Breeding from a cross—Selecting puppies—Unbroken dogs—Poodles for shooting—Spaniels—Mute spaniels—Double-nosed Scotch-terrier—Author's dog Muffy—Hill-dogs and low-ground shootings—Steady pointers for use on low ground—Author's dog Bosco—Guns and charges.

I THINK I have sufficiently enlarged upon the advantages of training dogs on the silent system, and that ordinarily adopted and advocated by the best authorities, such as Mr. Teasdale-Buckell, 'H. H.,' etc. Perhaps no dogs ever known could beat Mr. Llewellyn's celebrated setters, either in this country or in America, and in such hands as Mr. Teasdale-Buckell's

their training was simply perfection. I remember on one occasion his challenging the late Lord Lovat to run any one of his, the latter's, dogs, which he might select from his kennel of some thirty dogs, against one of his own which he named. I persuaded Lord Lovat to agree to run one, but somehow or other the match never came off, discretion proving more advisable than valour, I presume; and it was just as well for Lord Lovat that it did not, for I afterwards heard that no better dog than the one named ever set a grouse.

Now that birds have become so extraordinarily wild, I think my silent system will be found invaluable. The system of shouting 'To ho!' to a dog often causes him to 'set' when he really is in doubt, and so he is very apt to become a false pointer through sheer nervousness; indeed, I have known dogs made so nervous by being constantly shouted at and whistled to, that they would 'set' at anything, even a field-mouse.

Nervous dogs should have their fears overcome by judicious handling, and an utter absence of whip, whistle, or shouting; and with such measures they will, after a time, gain confidence, and work with satisfaction to themselves and their owners.

No class of dog is more sagacious than a pointer, not even the Newfoundland, St. Bernard, or Scotch collie breeds. The dog-trainer must ever bear in mind that intelligence is more developed in some breeds of dogs than in others, and this intelligence may exhibit itself in different ways in individual dogs. It is not always possible to control the keenness of setters and pointers as readily as that of retrievers. The instinct in one breed appears greater than in the

other, but the quieter nature of a well-bred retriever with a good temper enables him to be more easily and perfectly trained. If, however, owners of pointers and setters were to take the same trouble with them as they do with retrievers, they would find them equally intelligent. Too often the higher qualities of the former are neglected and overlooked by their being used solely for working on the hills over birds, and so long as there is sport the dogs are considered to be good enough.

To more fully bring out and develop the talents of pointers and setters, it is necessary to keep them less shut up in kennels than is generally the case, and to have them more about with us. Where such a custom is observed they will prove themselves not only to be as affectionate and sagacious companions as one could desire, but many of them are capable of being made as efficient retrievers as any dogs can possibly be.

The constant incarceration in Scotch hill-kennels ruins many a good dog, makes him sulky and disinclined to hunt, weakens his nose-power, and, as I can myself vouch for from sad experience, often produces rheumatism so badly as to necessitate the dog being destroyed. Proper management is even more necessary in Highland kennels than it is in the low grounds. When keepers are not scrupulously careful to keep their dogs constantly exercised, and warm and dry in their kennels, the mists so prevalent on the Scotch hills are sure to induce rheumatism. A careless kennel-boy may cost his master well-nigh a fortune.

Then, again, it is necessary to see that keepers understand and appreciate the difference there is between due kindness and encouragement to his dogs,

and over-indulgence and over-severity. The latter is worse than the former, for shyness or sulkiness will be the result. Both are a curse to a dog-trainer. When a dog is made the companion of his master he very soon learns sense. It is not natural for dogs to be either shy or sulky ; they are most anxious to please their master. Kennel-dogs are often past their prime before they evince any special sagacity or make a name for themselves on the moor.

There is doubtless a marked difference in the sagacity exhibited by individual dogs ; as I have before remarked, I have known a terrier which belonged to a poacher which used to 'set' snipe in the most orthodox manner, though I do not suppose his talents would have served him equally well on a grouse moor. I have myself also owned collies which were quite up to the average of ordinary retrievers ; but though both terriers and collies can be most useful for shooting purposes, it is not to be expected that they are equal to those breeds whose natural instincts are to 'set' and retrieve, and they would be infinitely of greater use in their natural vocations. The hunting power of a collie is, of course, very inferior to that of a pointer or setter. So, although dogs may occasionally evince a talent for a vocation which is not naturally theirs, they must be far more valuable when used in that sphere which belongs to them.

As I have said, the sagacity shown by a dog very much depends upon the treatment it receives, and pointers and setters can be made just as sagacious as a Newfoundland or an Irish water-spaniel, the last-named being a marvel of intelligence, and a breed which is, I grieve to say, daily becoming more scarce.

These dogs, from being constantly at the side of their masters, became marvellously clever, and understood every sign made to them by him. Collies, again, learn not only to carry out the behests of their masters in a wonderfully intelligent manner, but even to anticipate their wishes, being ever on the alert to please them. I have known many a setter equally sagacious, and able to perform feats which were the admiration of others who had from time to time observed their gradual training carried out by making them think for themselves and use their own reasoning powers, instead of being always on the look-out for the whistle and whipcord.

One may be often mistaken in one's judgment of dogs; frequently dogs which are shy and most unlikely prove to be possessed of more than ordinary intelligence. Their powers often lie dormant until called into action by being trained and taken notice of.

I have tried crossing various breeds of dogs from time to time, and have not always been successful in obtaining what I required. In a terrier and retriever cross I found that if too much of the terrier prevailed the progeny turned out wicked; and if, on the other hand, there was too little of the blood, nose-power was deficient. Out of several failures, the best cross I ever shot over was that of a collie and terrier, which produced a dog of exquisitely fine nose, and all the characteristics of the best retriever. The dog I refer to at the present time belongs to a keeper of Major Rose, of Kilavarock, Nairn, but is now worn out from the results of a very bad attack of distemper and rheumatism. This dog combined all the good qualities of the very best retriever: his mouth was tender, he was

very bold in water or thick cover, could carry even a brown hare, and had a perfect temper. Such dogs can be trained to do anything and everything by kindness. Headstrong dogs at times require to be severely corrected, but the system of tying up which I have advocated is the extent of punishment which is ever necessary. I consider that any dog that requires harsh treatment is useless, and should be shot.

Everyone nowadays, keepers as well as gentlemen, insists on fast-working retrievers, and I am old enough sportsman to be well aware that such dogs are especial favourites with bad shots, inasmuch as they are able to retrieve game be it ever so slightly wounded.

Winged game, especially wild fowl, are far more easily gathered by a slow, steady dog; such a dog as is able to thread his line through dozens of pheasants without disturbing the whole beat, in the way a fast dog tearing after a runner is bound to do.

Some years ago I joined company with a friend in taking a shooting near Beaulieu, N.B. My friend sent for a deerhound which he knew well, at Achnasheen Forest. The dog arrived by train on a Tuesday, and on the Friday and Saturday did some tracking, but after being fed on Sunday morning it disappeared and was nowhere to be seen. For two days we heard nothing of it, and came to the conclusion that some poachers were making use of it; but on the Wednesday we received a letter saying that it had returned home on the Sunday night, having traversed a distance of at least sixty miles. This is surely what is termed 'homing instinct.' The dog had come by train, and had never before been in that part of the country, and must have crossed the hills, or it could never other-

wise have completed the distance in the short period of time it took to reach home, viz., between ten o'clock in the morning and five o'clock at night. I have heard of several similar cases, but none where there was absolutely no road to serve as a guide; the dog, being used to the hills, was apparently acquainted with the latitude and longitude of its whereabouts, and went home as straight as the crow flies.

The grand old breed of Scotch terriers which Dandie Dinmont made famous is not yet extinct. Among others, the Laird of Ardachie possesses two very good and plucky specimens. He, too, adheres to the names to which Dandie was so partial, and, like the old borderer, calls his dogs Mustard and Pepper. In the various fox hunts—that is, fox-hunting as known in the Highlands and in the border country—within the Fort Augustus district, Mustard and Pepper have for some years played no undistinguished parts. Within the last few months both have been the heroes of adventures, the particulars of which we propose to recount. In the autumn of last year Mustard was parted with. The new master to whom he was transferred lives in Strathdearn, twelve miles beyond Moy. The terrier was taken by steamer from Fort Augustus to Inverness, and from thence to his destination in what most Highlanders to this day persist in calling a ‘machine.’ He had never before been in the Highland capital, and, of course, had previously never set foot in Strathdearn. Mustard, during his journey, and at its end especially, appeared restless and unsettled. He unmistakably rebelled against removal to an altitude to which he had not been accustomed. Feeling, and no doubt suffering, as he did, is it to be wondered at that when

he found himself at liberty and unshackled, he, without any warning, gave leg-bail to his temporary custodian, or that he speedily made 'tracks' for what he regarded as home, without consulting or even making the acquaintance of a single dog in Strathdearn? Three days after the, to him, sad day when he first became acquainted with a steamboat, the poor wee doggie appeared at the Ardachie kennels, trotting very limply, and rather woe-begone in appearance! With the last little wag left in his tired tail he languidly sidled up to his old friend the keeper, and with a kindly recognitory glint of the eye sunk wearily down as his quondam companion Pepper appeared and welcomed him in that frisky and brain-penetrating, barky way dogs have made their own. Mustard was very stiff and exhausted for some days, but quickly recovered, and was soon as sprightly and lively as ever. This is only another instance of the wonderful intelligence possessed by dogs, and of the distances through unknown districts they travel in order to regain homes in which they have been happy. Terriers, unlike sporting dogs, do not hold themselves bound by any rules. They think, observe, and act for and by themselves. Mustard may have trotted by the highroad from Strathdearn to Craggie, thence up Strathnairn to Stratherrick, and so to Fort Augustus; or what is more probable, he may have taken a line across country (entirely moorland), and so dropped down on Ardachie. He must have taken his bearings from the moment the steamer slipped away from the pier at Fort Augustus; and whenever he reached Strathdearn, the fact seems to have been borne in upon his little mind that he had traversed what was practically two sides of a triangle,

and that, therefore, if he could but find and cross the third side, he must in time arrive—hungry and foot-sore it might be, but what cared he for that?—on the bank of the brawling Tarff, from which, without his leave asked or given, he had been kidnapped. It is pleasing to know that the Laird of Ardachie has decided that in view of Mustard's evident wish, not to say determination, to remain on the estate on which he has been reared, on that estate he shall be cheerfully granted a life-long right to occupy his old kennel corner, and be supplied with as much food as is good for him.

Now to refer to the incident which has led to Pepper having become the talk of the district. Some four or five weeks ago the gamekeepers around Fort Augustus engaged in their periodical attempt at exterminating the hill foxes, which are not favourably regarded by farmer or sportsman. Both Mustard and Pepper were called to their aid, and in the course of a few days twenty-six foxes were accounted for. On the last day of the hunt (a Wednesday) five were killed. From one of the cairns into which the terriers were put, a dog-fox bolted. The keepers thought they had located a cairn on the farm of Cullachy as the one in which he took refuge, and the party at once proceeded to it. The terriers were immediately put in. Mustard did not long remain inside, but no fox bolted, and hence it was supposed there was no fox in that cairn. The Ardachie keeper whistled to Pepper, who answered, but did not come out. Everyone present being satisfied that there was no fox in the cairn, all were anxious to move on. Repeated efforts were made to get Pepper out, but

though he always answered the calls made to him, it soon became evident that the passage was blocked. The keepers waited on for some hours, but finally, their efforts being unavailing, they left, getting home about nine o'clock p.m. Next morning (Thursday), five or six men proceeded to the cairn where Pepper was imprisoned. The terrier answered when whistled to. The rescuing party accordingly proceeded to remove the stones and rocks of which the cairn was made up. In the course of the day many tons were removed, but still Pepper did not come forth, though he continued ever and anon to respond when called to. The party did not go home on that night till a late hour. They returned early on Friday, and continued at work all day without result. Their efforts were repeated on Saturday, but though the terrier occasionally on these days answered when called, the answers became feebler and feebler. The would-be rescuers, knowing the terrier was still alive, returned home greatly disappointed because all their efforts at rescue had proved unavailing. They were so anxious to save the life of poor Pepper that they offered to return on Sunday. Having, however, told the laird that they had removed every stone it was possible for them to turn, he with great reluctance arrived at the conclusion that everything had been done that could be done, and that the unfortunate Pepper would therefore have to be left to his fate. The men engaged all belonged to the Free Church, and it says a great deal for them that they remembered and were, notwithstanding the many Puritanic notions which still subsist in the Highlands, willing to follow in the footsteps of Him of whom it is recorded that 'He said unto them, What

man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?' All they wanted was direction as to how they should proceed, in order to ensure the rescue of the poor little prisoner. Their own ingenuity was exhausted. On the afternoon of Sunday, it occurred to the laird that if he could secure the services of one of the men employed at the abbey in blasting operations, Pepper might yet be saved. The services of a man accustomed to blasting were accordingly asked for and obtained. A considerable party proceeded to Cullachy early on Monday morning. Pepper, on being called upon, feebly answered, and was heard moving about inside the cairn, which was a very extensive one. Fearing that he might be injured in the course of the blasting, if his exact position was not known, an attempt was made, by calling to him, to get him to move along to the extreme end. He evidently understood the intention, for some time after he was heard barking at the end desired. Blasting operations were then proceeded with at the other end. By two o'clock p.m. Pepper ceased to answer all calls, though several attempts were made throughout the afternoon. The rescuers waited on, hoping against hope, and at nine p.m. tried another blast, having previously agreed that if the terrier thereafter again answered, they would remain at the cairn all night, and resume operations early next morning. No answer, however, came, and the party returned home, where they arrived at midnight, sad at heart because of their want of success. All believed that Pepper had died of exhaustion and starvation, or had been killed during the rock-blasting. The cairn was not

visited next day, as everyone regarded the terrier as dead and gone. About four o'clock on the afternoon of Wednesday—that is, the eighth day after his incarceration—to the amazement but delight of the laird, Pepper, who was a mere bag of skin and bones, appeared at Ardachie! As he came along, he stumbled and fell, and appeared to be in the last stage of exhaustion. Needless to say, he was at once attended to. It is pleasant to be able to add that he is now on the highroad to recovery.

I have known cases of homing instinct displayed by hill-ponies before a snow-storm. In one instance one of these ponies was known to swim part of a lake in order to get round a fence which had been put up to keep the herd in for the winter, and for years an old pony I knew of used to lead the herd for some thirty miles home before snow came on. When this took place hard weather invariably followed soon afterwards. Doubtless these ponies scented the coming change, and, like deer, descended to the low ground before the snow arrived.

Falcons are capable of performing wonderful flights in an incredibly short space of time. I have many a time lost falcons which have given chase to some quarry which was suddenly roused, and this they would follow for many miles, and were often seen miles away, yet they invariably returned to the spot where they were unhooded and let off. It is strange, and much to be wondered at, how these birds, travelling eighty miles an hour, as they do when after game, can, so to speak, take the bearings necessary to enable them to find their way back over a route which they have never before travelled except at such terrific speed;

however, they do invariably return, without fail, unless they are untrained; and if the 'lure' is left, or thrown up in sight of them on their return, they will at once see it and light on it. I have recovered falcons which I never expected to see again by going out into the open field, where I had lost them in the morning, just in the gloaming, and throwing up the lure, when the delinquent would at once come out of some tree, or off some rock, and come to the lure, unless over-gorged, when some days might elapse before it could be retaken.

If it is necessary to purchase dogs, and the intending purchaser is at the mercy of dog-dealers, I strongly advise him to insist on having a trial of the dog offered him, unless he has seen it at work in the field and can thoroughly trust the dealer. No sensible person would care to purchase a dog for his appearance only, and appearance is very deceptive. What is wanted is nose, pace, and staying-power. I have owned several dogs whose appearance was all it could be, with good noses and a grand style of hunting; but the instant the Scotch mists came on, the fine-coated, silken-eared beauties curled up for the rest of the day.

Many people, including some of our best judges of dogs, are at times taken in by the appearance of a dog, and I myself have even shot over dogs for the earlier part of a season before I have discovered that they were deficient in nose. This constantly happens to beginners, who often attribute their want of sport to scarcity of birds, bad scenting weather — everything but the true cause. Pace and staying power are obtained without any trouble, but nose is the most essential quality for a dog to possess, and the most difficult to secure and to prove. The best way of proving

whether a dog has a good nose or not is to work him with another dog which is known to be perfect in that respect, and if the owner of the dog to be tried does not possess such an one, either pointer or setter, he should borrow some well-known dog. If the latter is not procurable, the next best thing to do is to watch the dog on trial, and if he throws up his head on finding game, and moves confidently up to the birds before settling on his point, the chances are that he is a good dog. If, on the contrary, he keeps pottering and poking about the birds with his nose close to the ground, and even then comes to his point as stiff as a gun, it may be assumed that he is not only underbred, but will turn out a hedge-potterer. A dog which is a close ranger on a moor is to be avoided; such dogs may do well enough for shooting where fields are small and the covert thick, but on the moors they are an abomination, and a bold, free-hunting dog will find four times as many grouse as a slow, poking one.

I have ever found that pointers possess truer noses than setters in dry weather, and have constantly known them obtain points in the hot, dry days of August, when setters have altogether missed the birds, and were more on the look-out for water than game.

Setters will not work in such weather without water, and therefore pointers are preferable for dry moors. They are, however, more liable to suffer in their feet than setters, as they are less protected by hair, and the heather more easily penetrates it; but I have found pointers invaluable in dry weather, when setters have been well-nigh useless. When birds get scattered pointers show their superiority over setters, especially on bad-scenting days; but in wet, cold, drizzling

weather a delicate or overbred pointer gives in and refuses to gallop. I never kept such dogs for any length of time, and I generally found my own breed of pointers were able to stand wet equally as well as setters. This fact may, perhaps, be attributed to their strain of foxhound blood.

In purchasing a dog his feet should be first examined, and these should be hard and round. The dog should be well placed on his legs and strong chested ; his head should be wide between the ears, and if not crossed with a foxhound the ears should hang down close to the head ; the hollow between the eyes should be well defined, the nose long (a double nose is no detriment), but not too broad, the nostril soft and damp.

For twenty-five years I used pointers in preference to setters, for I ever found them more staunch, more docile, better nosed, more intelligent, and they never required to be rebroken. Some such dogs which I have owned were perfect, and whether I was hawking or shooting they would watch my every movement, and needed neither word nor whistle. I cannot say the same of setters, even those best trained, for they often require to be rebroken every season—the Irish setters especially. A good pointer is worth his weight in gold.

I have known many of my friends to be taken in by dog-dealers. These canine tradesmen often know no more about the dogs they are trying to sell than does the intending purchaser. So the latter often buys a dog which is probably worthless, simply because he happens to be good-looking and drops to hand and pistol-shot.

It is necessary to observe, when trying a dog, if it sets at any droppings of birds there may be about, or if he is inclined to poke or potter ; if he quarters the ground properly, hunts up or down wind, obeys signal or call, etc., all these may appear to be trifles, but are very necessary things to note carefully.

Dealers' dogs are generally licked into showing up well, but whether they possess nose-power or not is a matter which is often not discovered until too late.

If people would but train their own dogs, where they have the opportunity of so doing, they would derive infinitely greater pleasure in shooting over them afterwards, and the slightest fault would be at once apparent. Moreover, I am convinced that the far too prevalent love of slaughter would decrease. Besides which, dogs thus trained become faithful companions, and soon attain a high pitch of excellence if not dealt with severely. If a young dog has plenty of game killed to him he soon learns to understand the every wish of his trainer, and pointers evince the greatest affection for the man who trains them and shoots over them, more so, perhaps, than any other kind of dog. When about to start for the moor their very countenances display the delight they experience. How vastly different such a case is to that where a man never trains the dogs he shoots over, and whom the latter never see except on shooting-days !

I can but judge from my own experience the genuine pleasure which dogs display in working for their master who has trained them, rather than for a keeper who too often only knocks them about and rates them.

When a covey rises a dog should drop at once, and if this is not insisted upon they will learn to run in to

the dropped birds—a most fatal fault, and a habit only appreciated by poachers who are pressed for time. The thrash-cord and spiked collar should always be carried in the game-bag when young dogs are being used, as one can never tell when it may be required to repress the eagerness of an over-anxious youngster. The keeper should never go forward to pick up birds until after the guns have passed them, especially when young dogs are out. I have seen many a dog ruined by a keeper beating a retriever or setter for running in to where a bird has fallen, and then going forward to pick it up himself. Such training only serves to teach a dog to ‘run in.’ If birds are left alone until the line of guns reaches the place where they dropped, dogs can then do no harm in ‘seeking dead’; but if dogs are allowed to rush ahead the moment a bird falls they are ruined for ever, and all the yelling and whistling on earth will never train them. I have seen Scotch keepers flog dogs most shamefully, under the impression that such castigation would cure them; but though, perhaps, cowed for the time, they were never cured, and dogs so treated often become so crippled with rheumatism, brought on by the free use of the stick, that they can hardly range, or retrieve, even at a walk. Dogs ill-treated generally die early in life, and never become trained.

When a high-mettled dog runs in innocently, no notice should be taken of it for a minute or two, but it should be allowed to become ashamed of itself; the trainer should then lead it back to where the shot was fired, and fasten it to a stick run through its collar as I have described and leave it, the shooting-party making use of another dog. I have never found this plan fail.

I have, by making dogs think for themselves, taught them to do all kinds of tricks, but never by thrashing them. The latter is a most senseless performance ; it may cow a bold, high-couraged dog, but it will tend to ruin its temper, dash, and love of its master. It is a mistake to take the dog back to where the shot was fired and thrash him. It will take many such lessons, because the dog is not only probably used to being thrashed, but he has company, and as soon as he is allowed to 'hold up' again, he begins to romp all over the place for joy that the thrashing is over. The other system is far more impressive, for the dog's agony of mind when left by himself, and the warning given him by the white-gloved hand held up to him before being left, are not easily forgotten ; and one such lesson is always sufficient for a fault which can be so easily checked, if the dog has not been actually trained to 'run in' through the blundering ignorance of a bad keeper.

There are ways and ways of training dogs, some of them the most idiotic ; the trainer, so far from breaking a dog of a bad habit, often using means which but serve to confirm the fault. I trust, however, ere long a different system of dog-training may be used in Scotland, for the surprise expressed lately by many tenants of shootings at the manner in which their lairds' dogs are worked must surely bring about a change for the better.

Another fault very common in young dogs, and one which is easily cured, is the tendency they have, when ranging with an older comrade, to watch him only when ranging, and to do nothing but 'back.' It is very common where dogs have been accustomed to

hear their trainers perpetually shouting at them, 'Hold up!' 'Hold away, you brute!' Not a word should be spoken on such occasions; the sportsman should take no notice of the older dog setting birds, but going up to the young dog, make much of him, push him quietly up to the 'set,' until he gets his nose before the other dog, and gets the 'set' all to himself, when the birds should, if possible, be shot one by one over him alone. After one such lesson the dog will not forget the assistance he has received from and given to his master. I have by these means succeeded in making dogs which were lacking in necessary jealousy invaluable, whereas, had they been left to the tender mercies of many of our Scotch trainers, they would have degenerated into 'blinkers.'

I gained some valuable experience from breeding dogs, more especially never to breed from any but dogs of the highest pedigree. No matter how good a fancy cross with fox or blood hound, spaniel or setter, it is a well-known fact that such a cross is the most uncertain getter of any one of the points required. I found that a first cross, no matter how perfect, never obtained a single point required, and oftener than not threw back to some undesirable strain.

When taking pups from a litter, after examining them thoroughly, slap a couple of boards over them, and at the same time get someone to coax them out with a biscuit. Those which do not flinch at the noise are generally the only ones worth rearing, and are certainly the best in the litter. Timid puppies generally get worse, and are a great trouble to break; but the bold, courageous dog invariably improves as his education is proceeded with. I fail to see any pleasure

in shooting, whether in or out of covert, with spaniels, retrievers, etc., unless they are properly broken and all whistling and yelling can be dispensed with. I have but rarely seen a Highland keeper with a well-trained retriever. The latter are generally spoiled by bad treatment when ferreting for rabbits, the securing of the rabbit being of more consequence than the education of the dog, which was expected to behave steadily afterwards in covert-shooting.

I have seen some very good poodles—a breed which seems more easily broken than any other breed. My friend the late Captain Colquhoun, of the 4th Dragoon Guards, told me of a cross between a poodle and a cocker which, I think, belonged to his father, the editor of *Moor and Loch*, in which mention was made of it, and which was a rare performer. I have also known several pure-bred poodles in France which were very perfectly broken, and were extraordinarily intelligent on game.

Spaniels, Clumbers especially, are easily broken to work within range when they have had a few birds shot to them. If well treated, and a sensible dog, it is wonderful how a spaniel will work round game, and herd it in so as to be shot by its master. When working for a stranger, such dogs are apt to become careless, especially if the shooting is bad. A steady, heavy-going Clumber will turn his whole attention to the game he wishes bagged, and his disappointment must be great when all his trouble of hunting it to the gun has been thrown away ; and being naturally slow dogs, they know well enough that they cannot catch the hare or rabbit, and so look to the gun to do so for them, and if the game gets off unharmed they are very

easily trained 'off chase.' As a rule, I preferred to have only one spaniel out of the team as a retriever, and none of them 'mute,' for I have several times had valuable mute dogs shot. If two or three of a pack retrieve there is certain to be jealousy, and in consequence a deal of 'mouthing.' I generally fastened a falcon's bell on the retrieving spaniel, so that if a retriever was not at hand he could be at once called on. Ramblers, especially mute ones, are a curse, and generally incurable. No dog which rambles after a first season should be kept; it is a very difficult matter for anyone to cure a dog of such a fault—the worst of all faults in covert.

I have for several years possessed a rare breed of double-nosed Scotch terriers, which beat any spaniel I ever had in thick covert. This breed is, I believe, now extinct. They are marvellously strong in the back and loins, and possess the most wonderful noses, and can take up the trail of a hare hours after the night run, and work up to its 'form.' I have known my celebrated dog Muffy do this, very much in the fashion of an otter-hound. This dog came from a keeper of the name of Macpherson (at one time 'the Lovat piper'), from Glendoe Lodge, Fort Augustus. Up to the time he was fifteen years old he was the best-nosed dog of the breed I ever saw. I have often seen him race a rabbit on the hard road at a time when no other dog could hunt either in covert or the open. This breed is in colour exactly like a yellow ferret, and their mouths are so small that they can with difficulty mouth a hare or rabbit, even if so inclined. They are consequently too small to retrieve anything except birds and rabbits. They are invaluable in thick whin or

gorse covert, for they can follow a rabbit anywhere. I only regret that the breed has been allowed to die out. I made it a rule never to work small dogs of any kind in company with setters, as to do so is sure to make them range too freely.

It is a bad plan to work hill dogs on low-ground shootings, for rabbits must be shot on the latter, and no dog is likely to forget 'fur' after a few have been rolled over to his point. Therefore it is advisable to use steady pointers, which are not likely to be so spoiled for low grounds. There are some dogs whose manners are so perfect as to be proof against any amount of temptation; and I have had setters and pointers which, though not permitted to retrieve when young, have taught themselves to do so when three or four years old. My dog Bosco was the best retriever I ever owned or saw for covert-shooting.

Once, when partridge-shooting at Killeen Castle, in Ireland, we called our dogs to heel, in order to beat a small wood for some pheasants. Whilst heading, a hen-pheasant came high overhead, and I fired at it, the bird coming down a burster, being shot in the neck, but going such a pace in the high wind that it appeared to fall fifty yards behind me. When we had finished beating the wood I turned back to look for the hen-pheasant, when, to my surprise, my dog, which was still at heel, had it in his mouth; neither shall I forget the peculiarly comical and sagacious expression of his face, which almost seemed to say, 'Forgive me if I have done wrong, but you would never have got it if it had not been for me.' I could do no other than pat him, and from that day he added retrieving to his other accomplishments, and was, as I have said, the

best retriever and the best dog on grouse I ever owned.

Who would not prefer to shoot twenty-five brace of birds over perfect dogs to killing twice that number from the butts? Surely no sportsman can compare the pleasure of the one with that of the other—especially if he trains his own dogs, which, when treated with kindness and proper judgment, never fail to do all they can to show him sport.

Before bringing this portion of the work to a close, I think it advisable to add a few more words on the subject of guns and suitable charges for them, the size of bores, etc., as such information may be of possible assistance to a beginner.

The following table of loads, suitable for a 12-bore of two weights, *i.e.*, guns of that bore for early and late shooting, will be sufficient :

Bore.	Weight. lb.	Powder. drms.	Shot. oz.	Length of Barrel. in.
12	6	3	1	30
„	7	$3\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{8}$	„

Some gunmakers assert that a 20-bore gun hits harder than a 16, and a 16 than a 12. Now, my own experience goes to prove that nothing is gained by using the smaller bores except lightness; and there are several drawbacks to the use of small-bore light guns, which are not compensated for by their being lighter. I have tried 20, 16, and 12 bores, and find that the latter hit just as hard as the others; besides which, 12-bores are now made to weigh only 6 lb., and no sportsman of any experience would care to use anything lighter than this, or risk the chance of accident

or incur the extra recoil in using such 'catch-penny' weapons. The best proportions for a 12 bore, and the handiest, is perhaps a 6lb. gun with 30-inch barrels, and provided that such gun is properly loaded, there is no recoil; but with a 5 lb. or $5\frac{1}{4}$ lb. 20-bore, the stocks of which are at times hollowed out on the sides, there is more recoil than in a 16-bore.

The old-fashioned 16-bore muzzle-loaders were wonderfully good killing guns; and I have never seen a breech-loader of the same bore equal their powers. I have in my possession one, a 14-bore, made for me by Dickson, of Edinburgh, many years ago, and it is as good as ever. This gun made some extraordinary good shooting in Canada, at cariboo and moose, with bullets, up to 120 yards. Nor have I, during a long experience, ever known a gun able to shoot a bullet truly over 60 yards at the outside. I also had another 14-bore muzzle-loader, made by Rigby, which was an exceptionally good gun at wild fowl. I gave it to Captain Colquhoun, for he took a fancy to it. The plating of these two guns, and another also, made by Rigby, was very perfect, and in those days no one could beat my old friend John Rigby in boring either a gun or a rifle. He also made a 13-bore breech-loader for a brother of mine, now deceased; and this was also an extraordinary gun, and shot as well as any muzzle-loader. Everything in a gun depends on the boring: if that and the balance are good, the rest depends on the user.

Boring is of the greatest consequence. There are many guns in the market which are highly finished, yet their barrels are often very inferior, and such are certainly not worth the fancy prices asked for them.

The more plainly a gun is got up the better ; for the more it is decorated the more easily it is damaged.

Nowadays there is such a craze for light guns that I may as well give what I consider to be suitable charges for them. If a light 20-bore gun can be made to shoot 3 drams of powder without recoil, then we must give in to the small bores, but until this can be brought about, the gain in lightness must be very doubtful, when only $2\frac{1}{2}$ drams can be used. At the end of the season birds are wild, and their wings ten times harder than in the earlier part of it, and consequently greater penetration is required. This can only be effected by the use of more powder and larger shot. In order, therefore, to avoid recoil, a heavier gun must be used ; and the test of a good gunmaker is now apparent if he is able to turn out a pair of guns alike, in every respect, saving that of weight. The load will of course vary in proportion to the weight of the guns, but nothing more than 7 lb. 2 oz. is necessary. Such a gun will carry a charge of $3\frac{1}{4}$ drams of powder and $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of shot without recoil. It should be impressed upon all loaders of cartridges that a little more or a little less will not do ; the charge must be accurately balanced. If not, it is asking an impossibility of the gun, expecting it to kill at long range when powder and shot are not equalized. Too much powder will scatter too light a charge of shot to the winds. Again, if the charge of shot is too heavy, penetration is lost. Both powder and shot *must* be proportionate to avoid what the Irish bog-trotters call 'scatteration.' The regular shooting of all guns demands that the charges used for them must be suitable, and this can but be ascertained by testing them at a moving target. Guns are

like women : treat them unfairly, and they will have their revenge. For my own part, I think that a $6\frac{3}{4}$ lb. gun, properly balanced and able to carry a charge of $3\frac{1}{4}$ drams of powder, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of shot, is quite light enough.

The best bored barrels I ever owned were made by James Lang, of Bond Street, and these barrels killed farther than any choke-bore ; indeed, I have often had to show the barrels to friends before they would credit that they were not choked. Many a time during a day when birds were wild I have had to shoot at 50, 60, and 70 yards, using the above charge and No. 4 shot ; and from the way in which these barrels dropped the birds, it was hardly to be wondered at that on-lookers were inclined to think they were choked, and that I was using concentrators, and since then many of my friends have had the choke taken out of their barrels.

A 32-inch barrel, 16-bore, with $2\frac{1}{2}$ drams of powder and 1 oz. of shot, should give the same results as a 28-inch barrel of the same bore and $2\frac{3}{4}$ drams. I mean, of course, with the use of black powder. It is, therefore, evident that a 32-inch barrel will beat a 30-inch, and similarly that a 30-inch will beat a 28-inch, the charges being equal in all cases. Therefore it may well be understood why 30-inch guns are preferred, by those who have been in the habit of using them, to a shorter length of barrel. A 30-inch barrel is also more easily balanced. It is quite true that many men use short barrels and shoot well enough with them, but I never knew an instance of anyone of them going back to the use of such barrels after he had used the 30-inch gun. I am certain that for all-round

work a 12-bore gun is the best, and will carry a charge of $3\frac{1}{4}$ drams better than any 16-bore can do with $2\frac{1}{2}$, above which charge the latter will recoil most disagreeably, and in consequence fail to give the same satisfaction as a good, honest 12-bore, weighing some $6\frac{3}{4}$ lb., will do throughout the season. If any reader can afford a brace of guns, a 6 lb. gun is heavy enough to use until the end of October, when the heavier gun will be found more serviceable, unless the work required consists only of ordinary covert-shooting or partridge-driving, when the 6 lb. gun will be found sufficient with 3 drams of powder and $1\frac{1}{8}$ oz. of shot.

PART III.—DEER-STALKING.



CHAPTER I.

Foreign and Highland deer-stalking compared—Self-stalking—Mr. Winans—Guides and stalking—Necessity for help of guide—Highland hill-keepers—Professional aid necessary at times—Pleasure of self-stalking—Sub-division of large forests recommended—Patience in deer-stalking—Anecdote of late Lord Lovat—Eight years after one stag—Stag-hunting *v.* deer-driving—Cross-bred stags—Wood-deer—Character of true Highland head—Cross-bred heads—Mistake of crossing breeds—A jubilee year—Bad beasts should be killed off—Tameness of cross-bred deer—Value of true-bred heads.

MANY distinguished deer-stalkers express their opinion, and most sportsmen will endorse it, that no sport can excel that of deer-stalking in Canada, India, Norway, and such like countries. In the Scotch Highlands, however, it is altogether another thing to be, as it were, 'led in strings,' and tied to the coat-tails of a keeper born in the forest. Sad as it is to have to say so, it is none the less an indisputable fact, and sport is being turned into a farce: we become tools used by the professional to kill deer. Oftener than not sportsmen so situated follow every movement of the stalker whom they are sent out with, and are ignorant of the difficulties which have to be surmounted, and know absolutely nothing further than

that they are to have the rifle put in their hands at the right moment, they are then told which deer to fire at, how to squeeze the trigger without a jerk, and to take a fine or full sight as the case may be, and this is called sport! Shades of St. John and Scrope. I should like to see one of these so-called stalkers put to work to stalk a reindeer on a Norwegian Fjeld, or a burhal on a Himalayan slope.

There are men who do stalk alone, but how many? Not half-a-dozen in the Highlands, I should say, though if I am wrong in my assertion I shall be only too glad to hear so, and to render an apology for the mistake. The rich merchants from the South take the finest forests we have, and in one instance an American millionaire took no less than nine forests, and knew nothing whatever about stalking, but continued to amuse himself with shooting driven deer, knowing full well that self-stalking was not a sport which could be successfully learned and carried out late in life, and he and his two sons derived infinitely more amusement from shooting at the driven deer. The two sons did well enough both at self-stalking and driving, and Mr. Walter Winans, the elder son of the gentleman referred to, was, while in the Highlands, one of the best rifle shots ever seen by even the oldest keepers in Glenstrath-farrar, and he is well known at Wimbledon for his powers with a rifle; he is also a wonderful shot with a revolver. The average annual return of the Messrs. Winans' three rifles was rather over a hundred and sixty-five stags.

As a rule, if a man does try to stalk his own deer it generally ends in his resigning himself to his guide, whether the ground be easy or otherwise. I never

found any difficulty in reversing the order given, and placing the guide in my rear, where he was near enough to give advice when asked for it. Of course, there are many occasions upon which a stranger to the ground, ignorant, probably, of currents of wind, sudden changes of it, etc., could not do without the aid of a guide, and doubtless without such assistance many a stalk would end ludicrously, and guests who are unacquainted with the ground would be a nuisance to their hosts and doubtless drive deer off their forest, etc.; but if men are not too presumptuous at first, and will take the advice given them by their stalker, they will not only avoid such undesirable dénouements, but will very probably secure sport. No more honest, straightforward fellows ever breathed than these Highland hill-keepers; they love sport, and are often more anxious than those on whom they are attending to secure a stag, and I never found them make any objection to allowing me to stalk alone, after the secrets of the ground had been explained to me so as to enable me to get within range (excepting in one old-fashioned forest where the guests were forced to keep to the tail of the stalker), unless I chanced to make a mess of the whole affair by reason of one of the many little contretemps which may happen on such occasions, such as a grouse, hares, roe-deer, eagles, etc., getting up, wind fouling, etc. The stalker would be as delighted as I was, if successful, and equally disappointed if I failed. We sportsmen have no truer friends than the Highland stalkers; they are heart and soul with us, and even if not, the extra tip given for being allowed to stalk one's own deer will go far to allay any qualms of conscience that may exist in the mind of any one of

them who may feel jealous or that his trade is being taken from him. To excite such a feeling in the mind of a stalker would be fatal, for he finds the brains required for the undertaking. It is the lairds who are the jealous people, not the stalkers.

I do not wish the reader to infer that I am so foolish as to advise a stranger to go into a forest for the first time and take the command, for this would be absurd, and it is quite time enough to stalk alone when the deer are sighted, and the peculiarities of the ground, which at times it is impossible to see correctly with a glass, have been explained. The best plan is to have the stalker immediately behind, and not to leave him unless the stalk is an easy one and the ground known. It is just as great a mistake to be self-sufficient at deer-stalking as at any other sport, for if fifty years were spent at it there would be ever something fresh to learn, especially in some parts where the wind is at times a foul problem ; so the beginner must be content to stalk for many a day in leading-strings before he can presume to dispense with the assistance and instruction of a guide, and if after a short time he is anxious to try an easy stalk alone, he may be sure that the good nature of his instructor will not hinder him. A successful stalk of this description affords joy unspeakable. Nowadays there is far too much stress laid on the firing the shot, and this is neither genuine nor satisfactory sport. A youngster, and even many ladies, can do this as well and better than many men, and can brag about having killed so many stags. When a beginner at the sport leases a forest he should stalk his own deer, for there is no excuse for his inability to make himself perfectly acquainted with

the ins and outs of the ground. Where men have to stalk new ground every season there is every reason why they should often fail in a stalk, unless the forest is an easy one ; but there is no excuse whatever for the individual who goes about with a whole retinue of assistants, with hot water, air cushions, changes of shoes, etc., and who has the deer turned to him. If such men but once experienced the pleasure of self-stalking they would willingly sacrifice half the heads ingloriously obtained for those which they had secured by their own prowess alone. If such a change for the better takes place amongst our Highland sportsmen we shall hear no more regarding the scarcity of good heads. Every self-stalked head will be worth ten obtained in an unsportsmanlike way.

There are many of our Highland forests which would well bear being divided into portions of two or three smaller forests, and they would be better for self-stalking. I am aware of some proprietors who have trebled their incomes by so doing, and I cannot see why this should not be carried out in the case of the larger forests, and increased facilities would be afforded to many men to obtain forests which the at present very limited supply prevents, and the owners of forests would very sensibly benefit by reason of the increased rents. The usual limit as to the number of stags allowed to be killed would prevent anything like over-shooting, and it would take a man the whole season to kill his number of stags if he stalked them alone, and he would experience a pleasure he never felt before.

I have known men stalk one particular stag for years before they even got a chance at it, and this was a by no means uncommon occurrence in former days ;

now, however, most of the best heads are at once picked off, partly owing to the very great improvements in rifles, and the way the deer are circumvented.

As is well known, the late Lord Lovat was for fifteen years after a stag called 'Square Toes' before he succeeded in getting a shot at it. Like many of his kind, this old stag was possessed of an extraordinary amount of cunning, and although seen constantly with hinds he always contrived to disappear when they were moved in the most unaccountable way. At last, at the end of fifteen years, while Lord Lovat and his men were spying the ground, they saw the stag and hinds moving towards a hill, but when the deer got to the sky-line the hinds alone appeared to cross over it; the stag had again vanished, and had apparently left them as usual. The old stalker took his glass down and shut it up with a slap in disgust, and Lord Lovat resigned himself to his usual fate. Amongst the gillies there was one of them who was a new hand, and he had also been spying the deer with the rest of them, and he very bashfully remarked that one of the hinds going over the sky-line appeared to have three ears. The old stalker, overhearing it, exclaimed to an under-keeper, 'What is it yon lad says to you?' On the remark being repeated the old fellow jumped for joy, and turning to Lord Lovat he said, 'My lord, yon stag is with the hinds; we'd better be going.' Lord Lovat, not having distinctly heard the above conversation, was at a loss to understand how the old man could tell that the stag was with the hinds, for they had all seen the deer cross over the sky-line without any stag. The knowing old stalker had, however, at once grasped the whole situation, and how it was they

had been for so many years deceived by the tactics of 'Square Toes,' from the simple statement made by the lad ; and he did not wish to lose any time in taking his revenge, for he said, 'There's no time to be lost. Come, my lord, this stag is with yon hinds as sure as death. Let us be going.' 'But how on earth can you make out such a thing ?' asked his master. 'Well, my lord,' he replied, 'if you will be starting, to save time I will tell you before we get very far even now ; when we get to yon sky-line where they crossed we shall see "Square Toes," or I am mistaken, for do you see yon lad says he saw "three ears on a hind." Well, it's just possible yon third ear was a brow-antler, and this canny beast has all this time been doing us by throwing his horns on his back, and gets in amongst the hinds when going over the sky-line.' Lord Lovat was very much delighted with this sharp conclusion, and admired the cuteness of the old stalker more than ever. They all hurried up the next hill, and were just in time to get a view of the deer in the next 'corrie' before fading out of sight, and to their surprise and delight, there was 'Square Toes' sure enough, feeding along with his harem. A fine-looking hart in weight, but his head had gone off with age. Up to that time the stag had only been known by his peculiar square track, and had for fifteen years gone by the name of 'Square Toes' ; and now the excitement of the first sight of him after such a long trial for a shot naturally somewhat acted on the nerves of his noble owner, and he only succeeded in breaking his hind-leg with the first barrel, and missed him with the second barrel as he was galloping off. The remainder of the day was wasted in vainly searching for the wounded beast, and

the search had to be abandoned. In a sorry frame of mind he started for home with his stalker. When they had left the forest, and had gone about a mile on the road home in the gloaming, the stalker spied something like a beast lying behind a tree, quite close to a croft, and he stopped his master, saying, 'There's a beast lying there behind that bush, and I am thinking it may be that canny beast has just left the forest and lay down there.' Lord Lovat could also discern a beast of some sort, but said that it must be the crofter's horse or cow, and that no stag would come down amongst the crofts. The old stalker insisted, 'This beast can do any canny thing; and if your lordship shoots yon beast, whether it be stag, horse, or cow, where is the matter? You can pay for the shot if it is not the wounded beast.' 'Very right,' thought Lord Lovat; 'perhaps you are right again;' and so he left the old stalker where he was, so as to keep the attention of the beast fixed on him. It is a well-known fact that deer and even grouse do not mind men passing on a road, but if but one step is taken on to the moor they are off at once. He therefore crept round under a bank, and getting a better look at the beast, fired and killed it, and to their astonishment and delight there at last lay 'Square Toes'; the bullet had at last found its billet.

I have myself been for years after one stag without ever seeing more than the track of the cunning beast; and in one case I tried for eight years for a big stag before I got a sight of him, yet I must have often been quite close to him in a small and wooded shooting. One day, when returning from salmon-fishing on the Beauly, on the 9th of August, 1886, having caught two

fine grilse and several sea-trout, just as I got in sight of Torrecleian, the first hill seen from the road opposite Morniach Castle, I saw three stags on the sky-line. On taking out my glass, I saw a big stag, with the widest head I had ever seen in Scotland, lying on the very top and in the most prominent place. There were five stags in sight, but no hinds, and the big one was the only one of them which was lying down. It was only three minutes' drive to the gun-room, so leaving the horse and trap, I started with my rifle and tracking-dog, leaving my son where I had first spied them. The wind could not have been worse, being east, and blowing straight from me to the deer, and so I was forced to make a long tramp round the hill, so as to get the wind in front of me. I gave my son instructions to give me the usual deer-stalkers' language whenever he saw me if the beast moved after I got up and spied him with the glass. It took me nearly an hour to get to the corrie I wanted to reach behind the deer, and when I reached it I saw, to my disgust, three small stags, and, as bad luck would have it, feeding down wind, so I was forced to wait. They very nearly fed on to my tracks coming up, and, to make matters worse, I had sat down in a foul current of wind which curled round the top of this hill. All this time there lay the big stag out of shot ; but if it had not been for the three stags I could have got an easy stalk at him to within about eighty yards. Still the stags came on feeding, until I feared they must have winded me. In desperation I flew some bog-cotton in the foul wind, and it went within five yards of their noses, and I thought my chance was gone. However, just then they turned back to the big stag, and, to my relief, fed

up to him, walked on past him, and fed quietly over the sky-line into the next corrie. The moment they were out of sight the big stag rose and stretched himself, and showed me the finest body I had ever seen—at least twenty-four stone. The current of wind had saved me so far, but as yet I dared not move, as I thought the wind had changed, as it often did in that corrie at that time of day, generally following the sun; but on trying the cotton again, I found there was just a chance of getting between the two currents, the one blowing from the right-rear, a little to the right of the line towards which the deer were feeding, the other coming from them to me. There was no time to be lost, and there was time to run the big stag down before any mischief could be done. He was most provokingly slow in feeding after the others over the sky-line. At last he gained the top, and before his hind-quarters were out of sight I got up to run, but had to drop again like a shot, for, to my dismay, on standing up I espied another pair of horns appearing, and then the body of a small stag, which I had not seen before, and which had been feeding below where the big stag had been lying; and so I had again to wait, as the latter was well guarded both in front and behind, besides having the advantage of two winds to warn some of them. The young stag, not seeing the others, trotted off after them, and was soon also over the sky-line. I don't think anyone could have run the two hundred yards in much less time than I did, for I knew that the two currents of wind must now have almost reached some of the leaders. I had on silent shoes, and was a bit blown when I got up and crawled as best I could to where they had fed over and down

the hill. Whilst wriggling myself forward as quietly as I could, I saw the top of the back of a deer, but which of them it was I could not distinguish, as it was so near that it was dangerous to move. It certainly was not more than ten or twelve yards from me, and I naturally thought that it was the small stag which had been the last to disappear over the sky-line. It was an awkward predicament to be in; I could not conceal myself any better, and I could not get back again, and if he lifted his head he was bound to see my cap, at all events. His head, being downhill, was not visible, and if I put myself in position to shoot the wrong stag, the least rustle would, I thought, be heard, and he would be off and give the alarm. As bad luck would have it, up went his head, and I saw, to my disgust, that it was the big stag. I was thunderstruck. The beast had allowed the last of his rear-guard to go in front of him, and had sold me. I had lost five good minutes watching the top of his back, and thought it was the little stag all the time, instead of getting a rest ready. If I *had* but known, what a deal of disappointment I should have been spared! However, such is luck. The brute at once saw my cap—there was no getting lower, nothing to hide me now. I crawled slowly back as best I could, and put out my hand for the rifle as he gazed defiantly at me, not dreaming that I was an enemy, with all his guards and currents of wind to protect him, the cunning brute after which I had wasted years. He had fed over that very spot just before, and was on the point of returning to see what sort of an animal it was lying there, when my eye or something moved, and he swung his head across his body just as I had pushed the rifle through the heather and had

let drive a snap-shot at him. That swing of his head, standing as he was downhill, caught my bullet, which was going straight to his heart, and turned it into his neck, merely wounding him, and he was out of sight in no time.

I did not finish that stag until a long time afterwards, when he had lost his former weight ; but, thanks to my dog, I found him after I had got a snap-shot at him in some thick birch covert, where he was in the habit of hiding during the day, and on skinning him I found my first bullet in his neck, as flat as a shilling. The head was the widest I have ever got, being just $37\frac{1}{4}$ inches inside measurement from tip to tip, and nearly 38 inches outside.

So much for eight years' work, from daylight till dark, season after season, at last rewarded. On both occasions I was, save my dog, quite alone, though my youngest son was the first up at the finish. Such is the pleasure of self-stalking. One never forgets the stags so obtained ; but when any amount of assistance is given, I should infinitely prefer hunting a stag with a pack of hounds, and, if well mounted, to save the poor beast at the end of a good run, rather than to stop its career for ever by means of extraneous assistance.

I have ridden to stag-hounds since I was ten years old, and for years ever did my best to be up in time to save the deer, which was always the honour most coveted ; but it has always seemed to me that to shoot deer like hares, driven into a corrie and completely surrounded, or to shoot them in snow, is uncommonly poor sport. I may add that on such occasions hinds also are frequently included in such butchers' work.

Many stags are not genuine Highland-bred, their

tops showing the well-known blunt points of the park-deer. The difficulty of circumventing such deer is considerable, inasmuch as their natural cunning partakes more of wood-hiding, unless they are out on the rut, when they take to the hills with the hinds. Unless they are shot soon after they leave the woods, they lose their condition very rapidly. I fancy that this is because they do not, like the true-bred deer, travel enough over the hills, and their more sedentary life tells upon them in no time when they run after the hinds.

I have known instances where wood-deer in the Highlands are quite content to remain in the same place if they can secure one good hind—indeed, I know some such places at the present time. They are so lazy, and their hoofs grow so long from want of sufficient hill work as to resemble the feet of a cow rather than those of a deer, proving that they never travel far away from the woods over the rocks and rough ground, as do their wilder cousins of the hills.

The genuine Highland head is very easily recognised, with its wild-looking, noble branches; the points, too, are all sharper and more gracefully tapered than those of stags crossed with park-deer. Owing to this truly regrettable custom of crossing with such deer, the true, wild Highland heads are in many fine forests becoming more and more scarce.

Royals and imperials are shot down every season, and their heads may be seen being 'set up' at McLeay's, Snowie's, or Henderson's, in Inverness; but very few of them show the genuine wild beauty of the true Highland stag, so frequently to be observed in the best heads some twenty or thirty years ago.

The excuse made for this crossing is the advantage of fresh blood ; but surely there is no such necessity with deer which are not confined in parks, but which can travel from forest to forest, for the introduction of the tamer nondescript blood. It appears to me to be a direct upsetting of the laws of nature, where deer are left in their wild and natural state. When not crowded together by fences, they take good care of themselves, and roam just where they choose. The champions will force their inferiors to seek for harems elsewhere. It is easy enough to keep deer down. Just at present the difficulty in many forests lies rather in the other direction, for the good stags are shot down before they arrive at perfection, by reason of there being such a craze for good heads. In some forests the lairds have more sense, and afford a 'jubilee' to their best deer. Thus the Duke of Sutherland very wisely gives his royals a jubilee now and again, and is well repaid with some of the finest imperials which can be anywhere seen. If more of the rubbish were killed off in every forest, we should find that the deer would improve in horns. It is the most fatal thing to allow a lot of rotten-horned beasts to breed ; their progeny are useless. All rotten and switch-horned deer should be killed down, and the best young stags allowed time to get better heads. In one forest I shot we killed every objectionable head we saw or got a chance at, and the result is that some splendid heads have been got there ever since of a quality unknown there previously. This was in the forest of Rhidoroch, Ross-shire, and since then Captain Starkie has shot some very fine heads in that forest. In Lord Cromarty's forest (then belonging to the late Duchess of Suther-

land) there were some ten years ago more rotten horns than I ever saw elsewhere.

The reason that finer heads are now obtained in Sutherlandshire than in most places is that the Duke of Sutherland allowed his royals a jubilee year, so that, in addition to having the rubbish shot down, the fine heads are allowed to improve and breed good horns ; and his Grace has been well-repaid the trouble he has been at to improve his Highland heads, without having had recourse to the demoralizing effect produced by the present fashion of crossing. Owners of forests make terrible mistakes at times in their anxiety to produce large horns and bodies ; but it is only the true stalker who can appreciate the killing a really good, pure-bred Highland head in its natural wild state.

I have over and over again known crossed deer as tame as sheep in the corn and other crops ; but the pure Highland deer will not come down as low as those which are crossed, neither will they do one-quarter the amount of damage to the crops, unless the winter is exceptionally severe. In such winters the crossed deer will almost feed out of the keeper's hands, whereas the wild deer of old would sooner die than come near to a man. Hence a true stalker would not give a pin to shoot a tame crossed deer, whereas he would willingly give £20 to shoot a pure wild head. The latter, if self-stalked and shot, is a genuine trophy of true sport, and the pleasure is never forgotten. I believe that if a man were to live until he was a hundred he would have greater pleasure in the remembrance of some worthy achievement in deer-stalking than in that of any other sport.

CHAPTER II.

Training for deer-stalking—Self-stalking—Advisability of owners learning their ground—Invitation to Rhidoroeh—Scenery around Braemore—Prior Park, near Bath, compared to Braemore—Selfishness of sportsmen—Improved shooting-boxes—Beauties of Braemore—Down hill with a pair of screws—Start from Ullapool—Donald McLeay—A day in the South Glen—A stalk—Remarkable effect of explosive bullets—Donald and Dugald McLeay—How to deal with a female obstructionist—An eight-pointer—A day in Knockamphle—William Sutherland—A stag—Size of Rhidoroeh hinds—A bargain—Day-dreams—Vigilant and the witch—A big fluke—Man *v.* stag—At the last time of asking—The South Glen—A stalk and a kill—A bad day and a big stag—The wrong man in the wrong place—An imperial—The homeward drive—Mr. S. Platt's forest—Leckmelin—Crofters—Wyvis, and the late Mr. Horatio Ross—Glendoe Forest—A long way home—Necessity for carrying a compass—Lost in the mist—Advantages of a pocket aneroid—The fall of pride—'Solus feci'—Highland poachers of olden time—The ruling passion—Millionaires and their money—Former and present rents of deer-forests.

IN order to fully enjoy deer-stalking, it is absolutely necessary that a man should have been trained up to it. I have known owners of forests who have stalked all their lives and who are all the same quite unable to dispense with the assistance of a professional stalker. If such men had been notorious for their prowess in other sports, such as hunting, etc., there would be some excuse for them, but those to whom I refer have devoted their entire time and talents to stalking, or what they term stalking, and surely any other kind of

sport would, under the above circumstances, be more genuine. It is easy enough to kill a stag, but the sport consists in the way it is done. I trust I may be able to induce the younger portion of my readers to learn for themselves the very vast difference there is between self-stalking and the system which is nowadays more generally adopted of having the work performed by a professional, and I am sure that they will be well repaid, and I may add that if I am successful in my endeavours so to induce them, it will be a source of unqualified satisfaction to myself also. My object in writing at all is chiefly for the benefit of the rising generation of sportsmen, and I do not desire to vaunt my own successes, but to try and teach them 'the way in which they ought to walk.'

It is very possible, nay, most probable, that at first the attempt made to stalk deer without assistance may lead to signal failure, but the monotony of following a professional is avoided, and where the forest is his own property, or he has leased it for a term of years, the sportsman will find very great and interesting employment in studying the peculiarities and difficulties of the ground the whole year round, so that when the stalking-season again opens he will be *au fait* with every corrie in the forest, and the varying effects of the wind from every point. If he has a taste for natural history so much the better, and he will find endless opportunities for indulging it. One portion alone he must be ever careful to avoid, and that is the 'sanctuary,' or such portions of the ground as may take the place of what is so termed, for there the deer are ever left alone the whole year round, and feel safe within its limits.

If a man cannot evolve sufficient pleasure out of stalking in the way I have above described, he is no sportsman, and would probably experience greater satisfaction in mobbing a fox, than hunting him truly and fairly.

Some years ago I received the following note from an old friend :

‘DEAR C.,

‘Come up here next Monday and relieve B., who will meet you five miles from Ullapool at ten o’clock, and your horse can take him on and mine bring you here. We have only killed fifteen beasts, and being the 29th of September we shall find it difficult to make up our limit.

‘Yours,

‘G. H. T.’

I received the above note on a Saturday night on my return from stalking, and therefore was unable to go to the assistance of my friend sooner than Sunday, even if then, for the distance was too far, owing to my having to drive forty-eight miles from the nearest station to the forest. However, after having got everything ready to start after church the next day, I took the train to Dingwall, for by reason of its being Sunday I could get no further, as this train was the only one run on that day ; the consequence being that I had to drive the forty-eight miles to Ullapool, which I reached at ten o’clock at night, and though the scenery through which I had passed exceeded that which I had ever seen in any other county, I was very tired after so long a journey and glad of a night’s rest at the snug little inn.

The scenery around Mr. Fowler's, of Braemore, baffles all description; the wildest and most magnificent panorama suddenly bursts into view at Loch Broom, a lake about three miles long and a quarter of a mile in breadth. The Ault-na-Goira and another burn fall into it, and when full, form, together with the waters of the Broom river, the most beautiful cascades. The inn at Dundonald is the nearest for visitors to stay at, and is about twenty-four miles from Garve railway-station; a coach runs daily, and there are also other conveyances obtainable. The sea lochs of both little and big Loch Broom afford capital sea-fishing, and I think that sea-trout are also to be had. Sir John Fowler is fortunate in possessing the most picturesque place I have ever seen in Scotland, and it nearly approaches in beauty to that most exquisite of all places—Prior Park, near Bath. I have never, in any county, seen anything equal to the views from the Middle House, the Priory, the Rainbow Wood, and by no means the least beautiful of all, that from the golf course. I think Prior Park is the most beautiful place I have ever seen anywhere, and it is open to everyone to stroll about in and enjoy. I must crave pardon of the reader for my digression, but in making mention of the beauties of Loch Broom, it reminded me that it, of all the places with which I am acquainted, more closely approaches Prior Park in beauty than any other place I know. The view from the latter, once seen, will never be forgotten, and that from Sir John Fowler's shooting-lodge over Loch Broom and the Braemore hills is one of, if not quite, the grandest in the Highlands. My first drive, therefore, through so lovely a district was a very enjoyable one, and I

only regretted that I had no one with me to share the pleasure, which would then have been still greater; for, however beautiful scenery may be, half the pleasure is taken away if it has to be surveyed alone. Men are, I fear, very selfish in their sports, and I have often met those who care nothing for those belonging to them, but are content to spend all their money on amusements, and leave their families to shift for themselves as best they can. Their one care and object is to obtain sport at all risks, no matter what it may cost those for whom they should have more consideration. I cannot myself understand how any real pleasure can be derived by such selfish means. Of course, it is not always possible for a man to drag his family about with him, even if he is desirous of doing so, and the accommodation in shooting-lodges is often but very limited, and no more than sufficient for the number of guns which are necessary to do justice to the shooting. Of late, however, the lairds have been somewhat more liberal in providing increased accommodation in their lodges, so that larger parties can be housed, and some of the latter can enjoy the loch fishing while the rest are shooting, and ladies can also form a welcome addition to a lodge party.

I must confess to having broken the tenth Commandment, when for the first time I looked on Sir John Fowler's house at Braemore. If I coveted the latter, I but wished him an even more beautiful place, if such were possible.

I would have given much for the presence of some of my own family to have witnessed the beauty of the sunset that evening. Had I been an artist, and able to paint the wonderfully beautiful scene, so vividly im-

pressed on my mind even yet, and had painted it truthfully, I am sure that it would have been set down as the work of a raving maniac. As it was, I fancy that my intellectual driver thought I was slightly 'off my head'; he himself had no eyes for anything but a rather doubtful-looking sinew below the knee of one of his screws as he drove down the steep hill, and vouchsafed no reply to my exclamations of astonishment and admiration. I must admit that I myself felt not a little relieved when we safely reached the bottom of the hill, which he had negotiated at a full gallop, with a pair of horses absolutely deficient in shoulders, with doubtful fore-legs, and no breeching. However, 'all's well that ends well'; but since then a very bad accident happened to the same 'mail,' the pole breaking when going down this very hill. However, I must resume my narrative.

After a good night's rest and a breakfast at eight o'clock, I started in hopes of being able to accomplish the eight miles I had to go, before my friend could have started for the forest; but I quite forgot that he always kept his clocks an hour too fast: the result was that I had started an hour too late, and when I met Mr. B. half-way between Ullapool and the forest, he informed me that my friend had started, and had left word for me to stalk the northern beat of the forest; and he also told me that the sport had been very bad, and that several deer had been also missed. Wishing him 'Good-bye' and 'Good-luck,' I hurried on to the lodge, some four miles off, and found breakfast awaiting me, to which I did ample justice. The celebrated Donald McLeay, head-stalker to the Duchess of Sutherland, gave me a Highland welcome

and cheery greeting, which was not always his wont, if the appearance of a stranger was not to his liking, and betokened a chance of some days of fruitless toil. Nothing is more trying to a stalker than to have to conduct a Southron greenhorn, whose very first appearance and 'get-up' reveal the Cockney. Such men often arrive at the hillside faultlessly attired, both as regards the colour and fit of their clothes (the latter often too perfectly fitting); but nothing pleases the old stalker better than when he sees a guest, whom he expects to be some time with on the hill, arrive in old well-stained clothes, old shoes, and an air of general disdain for anything new—all about him showing that he is an old hand at the business. Not being a millionaire, my clothes were, as a rule, very shady, and several sizes too large for me, and my shoes well-sprigged and worn; and I have no doubt but that my whole appearance told him that I could 'go,' and, indeed, in those days I could, without bragging, walk with anyone for a week. Alas! I fear my ability to do so now.

Well, to make a long story short, we started for the south glen of Rhidoroch; and after an easy ascent of about 700 feet we came to the first spying-post, and I was glad to sit down, on such a hot morning as it was, especially after polishing off an extra breakfast. After a rest of about ten minutes, and a careful search of the hill with our glasses, we could only make out a few hinds, and these were of course right in our way to our next chance of a spy; and so we were forced to make a much longer *détour* than would have been otherwise necessary, in order to get a complete view of the next corrie, where we expected to find a stag

which had been missed a few days before. When we got to the spot from which we intended to spy the ground, the first thing descried was a large number of hinds, with the very stag we wanted. After getting a few hints from McLeay (the stalker of the north), I got an easy stalk, the ground and wind suiting in every way. McLeay was behind me, looking over my left shoulder, when I fired a left barrel, the rifle I was using being a new oval-bore, made by Lancaster. The stag was hit just a little too high, at 100 yards, and did not move away when struck, but was stretching out his fore-leg straight from him preparatory to toppling over. Wishing to put the poor animal out of pain, and also to try the rifle, I again put the latter to my shoulder, though McLeay tried to dissuade me, saying, 'Do not fire; she's done.' However, I did fire, and, strange to say, this second bullet entered the hole made by the first, and produced the most extraordinary result, for all the blood in the animal seemed to have collected in the spot where it was first struck; and when the second bullet struck it, a huge red fountain of blood spurted up to a height of two feet, and this, with the sun shining behind it, presented the most remarkable appearance. After we had gralloched that stag, there was not a drop of blood left in its body. I henceforward made up my mind never again to shoot deer with explosive bullets, for the sight was too sickening, and the flesh torn about in the most dreadful manner. Some of my friends would hardly believe that such a result could have been brought about by the use of these bullets. I sent the account of it to *Land and Water*, thinking thereby to prevent people using explosive bullets for deer-

stalking, though, doubtless, they are all very well for tiger-shooting and other dangerous animals; unfortunately, however, my letter was not inserted. Old McLeay from time to time reminds me of the occurrence, saying, 'I well remember the blood-spout coming out of the stag you shot, sir; and with my forty-seven years' experience as a stalker I can honestly say I never saw anything so extraordinary. I recollect calling my son to see the fountain, and that Dugald with the tracker was too late to see it.' (Dugald and Donald McLeay are the twin sons of the celebrated old stalker, and have started in business as gun-agents and head-stuffers at Dingwall, and are, I am glad to say, doing well, for their many years' practical experience with stalkers has afforded them the opportunity of knowing exactly how a head should be stuffed, so as to appear most natural. I trust that this brief reference may be the means of adding to their customers. They are both good rifle-shots; certainly the best in the Ullapool Volunteers.

We stalked two other stags that day in the South Glen, and would have secured a fourth, had not a witch of a hind spoiled our stalk. She got up on the sky-line between us and the corrie in which the stag we were stalking was in, and we had to lie there for three hours and a half, within twenty yards of her, while she watched the flocks of sheep being driven along the road below—a road which encircled us for some four miles; and it took hours for the sheep and dogs to get out of sight of her, and the light was beginning to fail; so while old Donald McLeay was having a snooze, much to his horror, I let fly at her. He exclaimed, 'Why, man, you have killed a hind; I

thought it was the stag.' 'That witch of a hind might have played us the same trick day after day, Donald,' I replied; 'the sheep are all on the road for wintering; and I thought it the best way to kill the brute, so as to give us a chance of making sure of that stag before we go.' 'Well,' said Donald, 'it was well done;' and sure enough, the next day we found the same stag in the same corrie, and though sheep were going along the road as before, there was no hind on the sky-line; and I got an easy stalk at him, knocking him over as dead as a rabbit, he nearly smashing his horns in rolling down the rocks. He proved to be a nice eight-pointer of some 16 stone weight.

The next day, the 30th of September, my beat was in Knockamphle, but the wind was all wrong, being due south. the very worst wind for that part of Rhidoroch. However. it was my first visit to that ground and unfortunately my last. William Sutherland, now head-stalker of Rhidoroch, was then the stalker on that beat; and after we had spied the ground, we came to the conclusion that we must keep the south march the whole way up to his house, several miles away, and endeavour to get round the wind from the other marches.

It was one of those very hot days when every fly can be heard, and we had not gone more than a mile and a half before I heard a grunt, or, rather, a roar, in a little corrie which we were trying to get round. Sutherland was in front of me, and on my 'chirping' to him he turned round, and seeing me point to the place where I heard the roar, said, 'There is no deer there. I never saw a stag there; it must be a bee humming

in your ear, sir, or some such sound, the day is so still;' but just as he spoke another unmistakable roar was audible. 'You're right, sir; and it's the first time we ever heard a stag there; and we must get right round the wind, and we shall have to go up to my house before we can do so, which is two miles off whatever,' said Sutherland. 'But,' I asked, 'would it not be as well to get a spy before going, and see how the land lies?' 'No,' he answered; 'unless the deer are in the far east side of this corrie, the moment our heads go over the sky-line they will wind us at once;' and so we wended our way without satisfying our curiosity, knowing full well that the roar was that of a good stag. After half an hour's climbing round the march we reached the desired spot before turning up to have a look at our quarry. The sheep, which, by the way, had no business there, constantly interrupted our progress, but by crawling carefully past them and moving them quietly up wind, they kept out of the corrie, and we at length managed to crawl within sight of a lot of hinds, some of which were feeding quite close to us, others some three hundred yards off. There were altogether about forty of them, and some of them were the largest hinds I ever saw in any forest—indeed, as heavy as many stags which I have known shot in some forests. I fancy these Rhidoroch hinds must be noted for their size, for many of those which we shot weighed 15 stone, and some even 16 stone.

It was evident that the stag we were after was lying somewhere out of sight. William Sutherland turned to me and said, 'I believe that this is the big stag which I have stalked nine times this season, and each

stalk he was clean missed ; and no doubt he is cannier than ever, and hiding in yon burn, where there is no chance of getting at him with all these hinds in the way, so there's nothing for it but to wait our luck, sir.' ' Well, William,' I said, ' if we get this stalk, the tenth will be his last, or else I'm a Dutchman ; and to make you feel comfortable over the matter we will have a stake on it, and if I miss him I'll give you a pound, and if I hit we'll cry quits.' ' I'm glad to hear you say that, sir, whatever, for I'm sick of this stag. She's the best in the forest. Nine times I've managed to get up to her, and every time it became harder, for a bird, or anything, now startles her for miles,' he replied. ' Well,' I said, ' you keep watch, and we'll have our luncheon and rest ;' and I lay down, ate a hearty meal, and fell asleep. How long I slept, dreaming of enormous antlers coming down on us from the sky-line, I can't say, but a careful pinch on the arm awoke me just as I was being eaten up by an elephant with huge antlers. I suppose the heat of the sun had exaggerated things a bit, but in an instant I was wide awake. William said, ' Be careful ; take the rifle ; I can't spy any more. There's a hind coming right down on to us, and you must just look over and chance it.' Taking him at his word, I crawled to where it was safest to look over into the corrie, and on pushing the rifle through the heather and peering over, there was the witch of a hind staring me straight in the face, and, looking beyond her, I could see the other hinds a hundred and fifty yards off, but no sign of a stag. I had barely time to take it all in, when the brute of a hind gave the fatal bark, the whole herd galloped off to the far side of the corrie to the west, and just as

they were getting out of sight we saw the stag jump up out of the burn and gallop after them ; but I let drive at him as he was going straight away from me at 200 yards. ' Oh ! ' exclaimed William, ' what did you fire for ? ' ' But, man, she's hit ! ' And sure enough the biggest fluke ever made was made that day, and the mighty one of the forest bit the dust.

I have rarely witnessed a more amusing sight than William Sutherland and that stag. The latter was hit just above the hock, or extremity of the haunch, and consequently required another shot to finish it ; but I declined to fire again, as when the first deer galloped off we saw a three-horned stag going away with another lot of hinds, and I feared lest another shot might spoil what chance there might be of their remaining in the next corrie or the one beyond, and so was anxious to avoid the noise. The beast fought William like a bull, and, stones being scarce, it was a long fight between the two, but at last it was killed by a blow on the forehead with a stick. When it was despatched, William jumped for joy and shook his fist at the stag, saying, ' You brute ! we've got you at last, after ten stalks.' After gralloching it, and having partaken of a ' nip,' we started after the three-horned stag, which proved to be quite a small animal and not worth shooting, and with only a broken horn, which gave it the appearance of being three-horned. The first stag weighed 15 stone 2 lb., with a very pretty little head, which, however, looked a great deal better on the sky-line than elsewhere. The head is in the room with me as I write, and is certainly a well-balanced head, of eight points only, but gone off with age.

The next day my orders were to go out again with McLeay on the South Glen, and we only saw one stag worth trying for, which we killed after an exciting stalk; for just as we were getting up to it I saw the tracker too close to my heels when crawling, and I raised my hand to warn it back. The poor brute was rheumatic, and feared that I was going to strike him, and gave a howl, and so frightened the stag, which I had just got within shot of. We, however, let matters settle themselves as best they could and kept out of sight, and after a time the hinds which were with this stag became quiet, and settled down to feed in the next corrie, where I got an easy stalk and knocked him over.

Strange to say, every stag I fired at that week dropped in his tracks, except one, which the trackers soon brought to bay in about two hundred yards, when I finished it. The body of this stag was a good one, but the head poor; and they are, as a rule, very poor in this forest.

My last day was a very disappointing one, for we came across the track of a very fine stag; but after following it for an hour or two we never got a sight of it, though it was on just before us, and the track was actually rising where it was held by the wet grass. We made certain of finding this stag in a fine corrie, where a lot of hinds without a stag had been feeding the day before; but when we reached the corrie, keeping the march, to our disgust we found a man at work at the fence. No wonder there was not a deer to be seen! We asked him if he had seen the stag, and he replied, 'Well that, for she came just by me before seeing me.' The wretch! I fear our language

was not all it might have been, for he had no right to be working at the fence at that time of year. On the way home we stalked and shot a rotten-horned stag, so as to prevent his perpetuating his breed. Such stags should be destroyed in every forest. The next day I bid adieu to Rhidoroch. The following year the big stag we tracked was killed by Captain Starkie. It weighed 22 stone, and had a fine head of fourteen tines, so that when it was seen by the man working at the fence it was merely a royal, and so perhaps it was as well that it was allowed to live and grow into an imperial, and I heartily congratulated Captain Starkie on his good fortune.

The drive back was most enjoyable, and I was able to see the latter part of the first day's drive, which I could not do then, as the light had failed.

During the time I was at Rhidoroch, when spying from the south side over a large sheep-farm called Drumrunie, it occurred to me that if this ground were cleared of sheep it would form a very valuable addition to Rhidoroch. McLeay informed me that this was not only feasible, but that the farmer would sell his sheep and forego his lease for £700. I longed to be able to afford to avail myself of such a chance. I afterwards mentioned the fact to a friend of mine, Major Boyd, well-known in the Highland forests ; and whether he circulated the information or no I cannot say, but soon afterwards this grand sheep-walk was cleared, and formed into about 40,000 acres of forest, which gives a return of about fifty stags. Mr. Sydney Platt has taken a lease of it, and Rhidoroch in the Coygach district in Ross-shire. The lodge is eight miles from Ullapool, the scenery unsurpassed ; the sea,

where there is seal and wild-fowl shooting and good anchorage, being within half an hour's drive. The grouse-ground extends to that loveliest of all lochs, Loch Broom. There is excellent fishing in the river Enard, which runs through Strathkenard, over which there are four miles of good salmon-fishing, and no end of loch-fishing, for, as I expected when there in 1878, there are several lakes in the forest, where there are some magnificent trout. How my fingers itched to possess that £700 ; and what a forest it is now !

About the same time that I was at Rhidoroch, Mr. A. G. Pirie bought the forest of Leckmelin, which I wanted the late Duchess of Sutherland to purchase. It is but a narrow strip, and one shot would suffice to frighten all the deer off it, and it was only fit to form an addition to Rhidoroch. Mr. Pirie got himself into hot water by reason of having to clear off the crofters and sheep, and even as it is, the forest was most decidedly not worth the harm it did in the way of fomenting the agitation existing in the Highlands, although the proprietor well housed the crofters on the road close to Ullapool.

Deer were plentiful in all the forests round Rhidoroch and Inverlael, and Glenbeg, belonging to Sir Arthur Mackenzie. I therefore lost the chance of a cheap forest in the very best county for deer, and I knew full well what a valuable acquisition a forest in such a neighbourhood would be.

Mr. Pirie behaved so handsomely to the crofters in housing them so well, that the agitation there is long since ended.

As a sportsman, one cannot be too careful, nowadays,

of interfering with the rights of the crofters, for they have been made tools of by the agitators ; and no matter how much good one may try to do them, they do not or will not appreciate it ; at all events, not for some time.

In the drive back to Garve there was nothing but forests all round us. Ben More, Ben Goblach, Ben Damp, Ben Wyvis, Braemore, etc. Wyvis once belonged to my dear old friend the late Horatio Ross, the king of stalkers, and so well known as the oldest stalker in the Highlands. It remains for a more competent person than I am to furnish his biography, for I could not do justice to it without access to the many records which doubtless exist, and might, I think, well be published, as being so full of interest. He made many a well-known wager, and it is also notorious that his sons are as good shots as their father ; I only hope that they may give the public the benefit of his life.

The year following my visit to Rhidoroeh I had some good stalking in the Glendoe forest, and out of a limit of forty-five I obtained three good heads ; there was hardly a bad head shot, but three were very fine heads. This forest, having been newly made, had never been let before. The only fault I had to find with it being that it was overstocked with deer, a fault on the right side, perhaps, since the ground which joins it, having been cleared, has been stocked with plenty of good stags. I very much enjoyed stalking in this forest, as when one had ascended the hills the ground was so perfect that any novice could stalk alone, excepting where open or exposed, as on Crairlie Moss, where we had to crawl from half-past

eleven to half-past seven o'clock, to at last kill but a middling beast only. The shot brought in every deer on the Kiblin ground, despite the fact of the wind being south, and in order not to put them out again we went round the march by the keeper's house, and did not return to Glendoe Lodge till twelve o'clock at night.

On the Corrie Yairack we were often bothered with the mist ; this is a hill which should never be mounted without a compass, and experienced stalkers have before now lost their way there for want of such precaution. The late Lord Lovat and his brother, H. Fraser, were lost for some hours grouse-shooting, owing to the mist coming on suddenly on one of these mountains, the highest grouse-shooting point. The sportsman should never be without a compass ; one can never tell when it may be required when deer-stalking, and, I may add, when grouse-shooting also, on some hills. An aneroid barometer is also interesting, and serves to show to what heights an ascent is made ; and even when travelling on the Highland Railway it is interesting to note the rise and fall of the several gradients. When travelling by train in some parts of the Highlands, the changes of the aneroid are well worth noting at times. The Raven's Rock at Strathpeffer is 1,700 feet above the sea-level (if I remember right), and when mounting it in the train, my aneroid rose more suddenly than when similarly ascending any other hill I can remember in the Highlands. Of course, when stalking, more sudden and steeper ascents are made. I once shot a stag on the very summit of Scour-na-lapich, 3,800 feet.

To thoroughly appreciate deer-stalking, a man, as I

have said, must be brought up to it, and 'fit' to go, as far as his own bodily condition is concerned ; and he must be able to act independently ; and surely it is a double satisfaction when, after having stalked a deer unaided, he can truthfully say, as he stands over the prostrate body of some 'monarch of the glen,' '*Solus feci!*'

Perhaps the finest sportsmen ever known were the Highland poachers of olden days. They went out for sport, and had to go through all the intricacies of stalking ; and, since there was no sale for venison in those days—at least, not in sufficient quantity to repay them for the risk of being captured and shot themselves, it was all for sport, and sport alone.

The old breed of collie the poacher used in those days partook more of the character of the deerhound—a rough-coated sagacious brute—and besides being very fast and wonderfully fine-nosed, they were quite strong enough to hold a badly-wounded hind, or even stag. I once used such a dog as a tracker for a week, and he most certainly appeared to be more of a deerhound than a collie. The cross is a common one. I often see these dogs bring deer to bay as well as any pure-bred deerhounds, and they seem to be more sagacious in standing aside, etc., when the rifle is brought to play on a stag at bay.

The old-fashioned poachers were gentlemen of the very highest quality compared to those of modern times. I am at this moment acquainted with an old poacher who shot from off his bed with his old flint gun ; he is a very old man now, but loves to tell everyone his long and interesting yarns of stalks, his escapes from the keepers, and the number of times

he gave the excise-men the slip. When the English began to take deer-forests the poachers began to be dealt with severely, and now the poor English squires are supplanted by the millionaires from London, Manchester, America, etc., men who cannot possibly be called sportsmen, as compared with the poachers of old; and the Highlands now teem with head-stalkers and watchers, who have to do all the brain-work for these imaginary sportsmen. Viewed from a sportsman's standpoint, the picture is a sad one, but, all the same, it appears to be a paying concern, and the country, generally speaking, benefits more or less by the liberal expenditure which nowadays obtains all over the Highlands.

Before the days of railroads good forests were to be got for a mere song; now, however, they realize fabulous rents, fetching at least a hundred per cent. more than formerly, though they are frequently but one-third of the size they were then. Indeed, I myself know of shootings which are divided into three parts, each one of which is let for some thousands of pounds, which formerly only realized a hundred pounds for the entire forest.

CHAPTER III.

Shooting black fallow-bucks—My first stalk—My last day with Donald Fraser—Care of rifles—A lucky escape.

IN the autumn of 1857 I went to Ireland, in company with my only brother, then in the 16th Lancers (I grieve to say since dead), to shoot the Black-Mount fallow-bucks, at the invitation of Mrs. De la Poer. My uncle was then agent to the property, and was, I may say, one of the finest shots in Ireland, or, indeed, anywhere. I was then young and active, and longing for first blood, and he very kindly lent me a most beautifully-finished Joe Manton rifle. The morning after our arrival at Gurteen House (which latter place is, by the way, situated in the midst of the most lovely woodland scenery), we started, a party of four of us, viz., my uncle, the estate manager, my brother, and myself, and arrived before daylight on the outskirts of the enormous range of woods, and Mr. Beg (the estate manager) placed us in our passes, the beaters being sent round the corn-fields and hill-tops to drive the deer into the woods, where there was any amount of safe holding. Unless, therefore, the bucks were shot as they entered the woods, there was but little chance of obtaining the best and most cunning of the old ones again that day. It was my good fortune to be placed

at the lucky pass, for no fewer than fifteen deer and eight or nine bucks came my way. Soon after day-break I heard a noise, similar to that made by sheep galloping down a ravine, in my direction. I can hardly describe what my sensations were, for my heart gave great bounds, as if it were a deer itself, and I felt that even with a shot-gun I stood a very bad chance of hitting anything. However, there was no time for me to reflect, or even take a 'nip' to calm my nerves, for on they came, without the slightest suspicion of danger, owing to the clever manner in which old Mr. Beg had placed me down wind. At last the leader came in view of me. I let drive with my right barrel; I could only see his neck and magnificent horns; for a moment my heart was in my mouth, as the smoke hid the result of my shot, and, to my disgust, saw I had turned him, as I thought, across my left front, fifty yards away, and going like mad, as if hounds were racing him. I aimed well in front of him and pulled my left barrel, and by the merest chance succeeded in breaking his back. One quarter of an inch higher and I should have missed him. With a loud whoop I rushed forward to finish him with my knife, but he fought and kicked so hard that there was no chance of getting at him without giving him another barrel, and this, with an empty muzzle-loader, was impossible, and I was in terror lest he should get up and make off. There was neither stick nor stone to be got, and so in despair I hit him on the forehead with the butt of my rifle, and, to my horror and dismay, away went the stock, leaving the barrels in my hand. Pain and pleasure, all mixed up in a heap—delight at having killed my first deer, and the most unenviable feelings

of regret at having smashed the rifle. 'Bother the brute!' I exclaimed. 'What a double-distilled fool I am. What on earth will my poor old uncle say? His most cherished rifle, and one which he would lend no one but me.' While I was thus vainly tearing my hair, my uncle and the rest of the party came upon the scene. I was just in the act of sitting down and holding the broken pieces together; but my dear old uncle was too old a sportsman to be taken in, for he at once caught sight of the rifle, and seeing how I was holding it, exclaimed: 'He has wounded a buck, the young beggar, and broken my rifle over its head instead of knifing it;' and turning to me said, 'You have broken the best rifle-stock I ever saw,' and with no little anguish of heart I had to admit the accusation, save that it was no easy matter to knife a buck single-handed. While I was speaking Mr. Beg called up some men to help him stop the beast struggling. My poor old uncle looked at me for a moment, then at the deer, and then at the remains of his rifle, and ended by bursting out laughing. 'It can't be helped,' he said; 'we must hope for better luck next time, and send the rifle to John Rigby; he will soon put it to rights.' As he spoke my ear caught a curious gurgling sound about thirty yards behind me, and on going off with my uncle to the spot we found that I had, with my first barrel, killed the finest buck ever killed in Gurteen. The smoke had blinded me for a second, and I thought when I fired my second barrel that it was the same buck which I believed I had missed with my first. When old Mr. Beg came up he said: 'He has shot the old buck which I was nine years after; sure enough it's a splendid head.' The broken rifle

was soon forgotten, and I expressed my delight in the three loudest whoops I ever gave in my life. I don't think I ever more thoroughly enjoyed my breakfast before or since than I did on our return to the house that morning. I killed another buck the next day, and these were the only three which were killed by us during our stay. I have never since seen such a handy rifle as the one I had the bad luck to break. My poor old uncle promised to leave it to me in his will, as a souvenir of my first deer, but I never saw it again. To give the reader an idea as to how handy a weapon it was, my uncle often used it for rabbits, and could bowl them over with it when going away from him uphill.

For some years after the above I did not get any stalking, for my time was too much taken up with hunting during the winter, and buying and making horses during the summer. Some twenty-three years ago I went to stay in Scotland with some connections, and I was initiated in the art of stalking the noble red-deer in the well-known forest of Strath-Farrar, and soon became enamoured of the sport, but after a time much preferred to do my own stalking. However, in those days this was not allowed.

In the autumn of 1868 I received an invitation to the Highlands from that best of sportsmen and deer-stalkers, Lord Lovat; his son Simon, Master of Lovat, who afterwards succeeded him, being then living. I had often seen the latter when shooting at Wimbledon before I knew him, and was afterwards able to value his friendship and learn to love him, as all who knew him were bound to do. The then Lord Lovat, his father, bore a strong resemblance to the

picture of his ancestor, the well-known Archie Lovat, who, making himself too notorious, lost his head. Both men were possessed of indomitable will, and it is no wonder that when he set his mind on carrying out any project, whether in the way of sport or for the benefit of his property or country, he was successful. He so increased the value of the estates that his successors will reap untold benefit thereby, and as a sportsman and county gentleman his fame is well known.

As may be supposed, I was overjoyed at the invitation and the chance of grouse-shooting and deer-stalking, carried out as both were in so princely and sportsmanlike a manner, for up to that time my experience of shooting had been chiefly confined to such sport as I had been able to obtain with the snipe and rough shooting in Ireland, or some very few days' covert-shooting in England. I had been in the habit of shooting at Wimbledon, and was a tolerable shot with a rifle, and the chance of being able to test my powers at the real thing was the cause of no little excitement to me, and, as I could see, delighted my host.

The forest was some twenty-three miles distant from Beaufort, and it was Lord Lovat's custom to go there on the Sunday and return on the Saturday, each week taking with him a different party of friends. The incidents of my first drive to Braulen (the shooting lodge) are as fresh in my memory as ever, and every incident and word are as indelibly impressed on my mind as if it had been but yesterday. The scenery was all new to me, and very beautiful; but I caused my hosts much amusement by my ignorance of deer-stalking and surprise that a forest should have no trees on it.

They tried to initiate me into the mysteries of stalking during our journey, nor could any pupil have received better advice or tuition from those better able to impart it.

‘Never fire at a deer till you are cool,’ ‘Take plenty of time,’ etc. Such was the kind of advice given me, nor have I ever forgotten it; and they told me that, as I had been at Wimbledon, if I followed these golden rules I had a very fair chance of being successful. Lord Lovat then asked to see my rifle, and I proudly produced a double rifle made by Lang. He looked admiringly at it, remarking that it was a masterpiece, slyly adding that if a stag were missed with such a weapon the fault would rest with the user. Nevertheless, I may as well add that, having been in the habit of pigeon-shooting at the Gun Club, it took me many a day, and I missed many an easy chance, before I could make anything like steady shooting at deer, for I had got into the habit of shooting too quickly; but after many days’ meditation on the subject, and the kind help given me by my hosts, I by degrees improved, and was able to carry out their advice and avoid being flurried unless I was blown by being foolish enough to try to keep up to the pace of the stalker. No one can help being delighted when for the first time he finds himself in one of the most beautiful of the Scotch glens; the scenery and the prospect of sport enchanted me, and the dear old lord was delighted at witnessing my interest and pleasure.

At length we reached the lodge, and, after a sumptuous dinner, retired to bed at ten o’clock, as we had to be up before daylight. I spent a night of troubled dreams;

stags by the hundred defied me, and just as I had raised my rifle to shoot a venerable elk-head of hundreds of points, it missed fire, and the huge beast was transformed into a lion, which was on the point of eating me up when I was awakened by Charlie, the cook. After consuming a breakfast which I thought was sufficient to last me through the entire day, I lighted a pipe, little dreaming how such confidence was likely to be upset before nightfall.

Being fond of a ride at any time, I was delighted to see some ponies outside awaiting us. On mounting the one told off to me I was not a little horrified at the saddle, and remarked, 'Do you call this a saddle?' 'Oh,' was the reply, 'you must not be so careful of yourself; you are not going to hunt a fox in soft saddle-flaps, but you will have to walk home, no matter how far you may have to go, and bring back a stag on the saddle of every pony left with you.'

What struck me most about these ponies was that while they possessed plenty of bone, were well ribbed up, and had good legs up to any weight, they were so utterly deficient in shoulder: the very thing required, I thought, to keep a deer-saddle in the right spot when going downhill. If these ponies had the shoulders of the Ardennes breed they would be perfect, and it would be well worth while to import a good stallion or two, and try crossing the breed. I never gave any ponies such a trial as I did these Ardennes ponies, which are beautifully shaped and pillars of strength, their shoulders fine and sloping, and ribbing and quarters perfect. I put them up and down the most frightfully steep places and they never came to grief, and, indeed, I do not think it is possible to put them down. It is won-

derful how the hill-ponies in the Highlands do their work. Even in the softest and most dangerous places I hardly ever knew one of them put a foot wrong, unless some greenhorn had meddled with their mouths ; they cannot possibly pick their way in a mossy pass unless their heads are left alone and they are able to smell the ground in order to avoid a mishap by being bogged, etc. The intelligence of these ponies has ever excited my admiration.

But to return to our day's sport. We each had a stalker assigned us, mine being Donald Fraser, one of the finest young fellows I ever saw, and who is still to the fore and able to walk most men uphill, and give them a dressing into the bargain. Our cavalcade consisted of four of us with rifles, nine ponies, keepers, and about a dozen gillies. The head stalkers then were John Ross, Donald Fraser, Colin Campbell, and John Mackenzie, men well known, I fancy, to many a man whom they have modestly and good-naturedly initiated into the mysteries of deer-stalking. We rode along the road for about three miles, when a council of war was held, and we were each told off to our beats. I was told to take the Dany pass ; and so we rode on about five miles further, when we dismounted and left our ponies tethered out of sight. Donald Fraser and I mounted our first hill together ; I went off with a grand flourish, which soon, however, died away, and I was frequently forced to look round and admire the scenery ; and had not Donald considerably waited for me now and again, I am certain I should never have seen him again, or died in the attempt. Moral : ' Never attempt to keep up with these hill-walkers ; their long stride is as deceptive as that of a thoroughbred horse

alongside a half-bred hunter.' Any one of these stalkers can give lumps of weight to an ordinary person and leave him behind, as Donald could have left me on this occasion, 'looking at the infernal view,' as I fancy he mentally expressed it. Eventually he sat down and began to cut up his tobacco, having evidently found out my weak point, and well aware that he would have time to smoke his pipe out before I reached him, and a ten minutes' rest to boot before I could make a fresh start. I shall not easily forget the awful cramps I had in my legs at dinner that night, or the numberless apologies I had to offer for kicking my opposite neighbours on the shins, or how nearly I was to kicking over the whole table. However, a glass of cold water gave me relief.

After coming up with Donald, and a rest, we continued our way, and then commenced what seemed to be an interminable climb, and I was forced to stop every few minutes to quiet the beating of my heart and 'mend my pipes.' At last we reached our first spying spot, and before I could pull out my Ross telescope Donald had spotted deer and which way the wind was for us, and with a grunt of approval turned to me, saying, 'There is a good stag lying there amongst that lot of deer under yon rock, and I'm thinking she has a good head of ten points.' In great excitement, but trying to appear cool, and after many explanations as to where to fix my glass, I succeeded after a time in discovering a lot of deer, but for a long time failed to discover the stag; but when I did, I said, 'Why don't we start at once?' 'She may lie there five hours before Mr. C. will get a chance at her,' Donald replied; and then he explained how he intended to circumvent 'yon stag,'

very much enlightening me regarding the difficulties often experienced in stalking a good beast. 'The wind is very kittle just there, and see, yon hinds are feeding just in the road we ought to go. However, we have a long way to get round them, and we must be going, or else we'll never get deer talking here,' he said, and as I was quite of the same way of thinking, I was only too glad to make a start. Again another awful climb made me as hot as ever, and I thought that if I could but get a chance of using my rifle on the stag while my hands were warm, his days would be numbered. However, I found stalking by no means as easy as I thought, and I never before realized how closely allied to a serpent man is, until I saw Donald's movements. He several times when we were on the open flats made me crawl behind him, the whole of the front part of my body, from my chin to my toes, touching the ground. Neither did the operation serve to chill my ardour, though the water out of the moss chilled me to the inside; but my blood was up, and if it cost me ever so many waistcoats and watches I was determined to slay that stag, and so I obeyed Donald's instructions to the letter, and as if my very life depended on my twisting myself into the similitude of a snake. At last our crawling came to an end, and we were able to rise, and I rose up dirtier than ever I was in my life, even after being pulled out from under my horse in Kilkenny. 'New clothes be hanged!' 'Where is the stag now, Donald?' I asked. 'Still lying, and maybe she will lie in the sun there for hours. She is about a hundred and forty yards from yon rock, and there is several hinds between it and the stag, so we must keep canny here until the witches feed

up wind, when we can get to yon rock.' And so we had to lie down, wet to the bone, for an hour and a half before the hinds fed out of our sight; and when they did so I felt more like a mummy than a man, for what with chilled perspiration, mud and peat-bog water, I fully realized that stalking was no such simple work, and I would have given Donald a five-pound note at that moment to show me the shortest way home, for I thought I should have died, and could not have pulled a trigger to save my life. I was actually on the point of asking the shortest way to where we left the ponies, fearing lest I should be done to death by being so chilled, and disgracing myself for ever, when the hinds moved, and the instant they disappeared Donald made right uphill for the rock, getting over the ground as easily as if it were level going.

The exertion of trying to keep up with him served to restore my circulation, and I really believed at the time saved my life, for I was then unaccustomed to the sensation of being wet through with perspiration and water, and again chilled to the very marrow. Having reached the top of the hill, we crawled carefully over towards the rock where the stag was lying, and to our dismay discovered some more hinds, which we had not before seen, lying down in our way, and so we had again to lie down; but this time I had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing the quarry which I had mentally already doomed to die—as Donald said, a fine stag of ten points—about 145 yards off. Our present quarters were more sheltered than the last, and a nice sloping mound of heather afforded as good a rest for my rifle as I could wish for; but having settled myself and got ready to fire, Donald informed me that from the

position in which the stag was lying it would be impossible to hit it in a vital part, and so he said, 'We must just bide a wee until she rises,' as the day was near the time they feed. For yet another hour and a half we waited, and still the stag and hinds lay there as if they never intended to rise. The sun was hot, and Donald grew drowsy. I thought to myself, 'There is a large fat stag lying broadside on to me, and here I lie; but if my drowsy friend thinks that I am duffer enough to miss him after making nineteen bull's-eyes running at Wimbledon he's very much mistaken;' and seeing Donald still drowsy, I took careful aim and fired low at the shoulder. Donald, who all the time had his weather-eye open, exclaimed at once, 'You've missed the deer, for she was lying;' and he apparently was right, as the stag galloped off with the hinds, but before he was out of shot I fired a second barrel. Again Donald exclaimed, 'She's missed!' but still keeping our glasses on him, he added, 'She's hit!' to my inexpressible joy, and we watched the stag leave the hinds and disappear in a burn. Donald's expression changed from disgust to satisfaction; and on my reloading and starting to run, he stopped me, saying, 'Leave her lie a bittie, she will get sick;' and so we walked on quietly. The distance to where the stag had disappeared seemed to me to be about 300 yards, but it proved to be quite half a mile, the rough moor ground being so deceptive. The stag was to all appearance done for, but I gave it another barrel as I stood over it, and as it rolled over I gave a loud 'Whoop!' To judge by his expression of horror, Donald evidently thought me a lunatic, and, to make matters worse, I roared with laughter at his

horror-struck face. It never occurred to me that he knew nothing about hunting, and that I was making an ass of myself, which I was, for, as he remarked, 'You have frightened all the deers out of our beat, and we may just go awa hame.' And so I had my first lesson in stalking. I am a quiet enough stalker now, and have succeeded in training others to be the same ; but it is all owing to Donald Fraser's being so severe with me on the occasion of my first stalk. My first shot had struck the deer on the left foot, which was curled up under his heart, between hair and hoof—about the sorest spot deer can be struck in, causing the poor beasts such agony that they have been known to go and lie down after going a short distance if struck there. We found that all three shots had taken effect ; the second shot was a slanting side-shot, entering at the fifth left rib, and coming out high near the right shoulder, thereby proving that the third shot was unnecessary. But who would not make sure of his first stag, and that a fine ten-pointer, weighing a good 17 stone 12 lb. ?

The hind-drive last year was about the worst sport, as far as I was concerned, I ever experienced. I received a telegram on a Sunday asking me to go and shoot hinds the next day, and my rifle being at the gunmaker's, I had to accept on the condition that the loan of a rifle could be added to the invitation. This was kindly acceded to, and I started merrily enough, and eventually reached my destination. The next morning was soft and mild, and the wind westerly, more like spring than winter, and this for Christmas week was good luck, as I have a strong objection to shooting hinds when they are up to their

middle in snow, though the rest of our party were disappointed because there was no snow to keep the deer low down to the guns. Having arrived at our passes, Donald Fraser driving towards young Lord Lovat and myself, I descried several lots of hinds in the distance which were coming straight to my pass; and at last they came right and left of me, trotting past. Such a glorious chance of getting three or four of them, at least, I thought. I put up my rifle quietly so as not to attract their attention, and before I had put it to my shoulder it went off, though I scarcely even touched the trigger.

Now, since a sporting rifle ought at the very lightest to pull 1 lb., it will be readily understood how utterly useless and dangerous a hair-trigger on such an occasion would be; and I knew that with such a weapon I could be of little use. As bad luck, too, would have it, that was the only pass in which the wind was right during the three days I was there. In all the others it was hopeless to expect deer. I think Donald Fraser was even more vexed than I was, for hinds when coming straight on are not very difficult to shoot. When we were walking in line, and it was safe to do so, I again tried the well-balanced Purdey; but on each occasion the deer were galloping, and the hair-trigger was useless. Let my reader take warning by my sad fate, and if he ever chances to borrow a rifle, see that the pull-off of the trigger is all right, and such as he is accustomed to, as he will not only *miss*, but perchance make a *mess* of it, and cause the drivers no slight anxiety, even if he is fortunate enough to do none of them serious damage.

After the season is over, rifles should always be

sent every year to the maker. Keepers can look after shot-guns well enough, but rifle-locks, if once neglected, are ruined, and the triggers suffer. In the case which I have quoted above, the maker (Mr. Purdey) was in no way to blame, for no finer rifle was ever turned out. It was one of a pair given by Mr. Winans to the late Lord Lovat, and the finish was perfect.

The foregoing, however, was but a trifling mishap to one which occurred to me several years ago, when I had chances at the four best stags in a forest, and missed them, by reason of the sights of the rifle not having been tested before being sent out by the maker, the rifle actually shooting one foot low at forty yards. It was the first time I ever borrowed a rifle, and will be the last, unless from an experienced sportsman. Everyone who owns a gun should be aware of the infinite danger there is if the locks are neglected. I can speak from somewhat bitter experience, for when I was but a boy at college the second barrel of a muzzle-loader went off while I was loading it when rook-shooting. It was a marvellous escape, as narrow as any man ever had; for though my hand was shot through with a wire cartridge, I only suffered the loss of the tendon of my right thumb.

CHAPTER IV.

Lord Lovat—The late Simon Lord Lovat—Extract from the *County Gentleman* respecting him—Lady Lovat—The present Lord Lovat—Colonel the Hon. Alastair Fraser—The Dowager Lady Lovat—Death of Colonel Fraser.

TWENTY-FOUR years ago everything was *couleur de rose*. Since then, however, many sad events have occurred to mar the reminiscences of those halcyon days. Many of the Lovats, those best of sportsmen, have passed away. True it is that we ourselves must make up our minds to one day lie as dead as any stag which has succumbed to the fateful bullet; but until that time I must mourn the loss of the kindest and truest friends I ever owned, a loss I can never replace.

When old age overtakes us we are forced to reconcile ourselves as we best can to the fact that 'what must be, must'; and when the late Lord Lovat's father died, we all grieved for the loss of a dear old friend, whose sole anxiety was that everyone around him should enjoy his hospitality, and who, unlike many men, was ever far more pleased if his friend and guest secured the 'head of the season' than if such good luck had fallen to his own rifle. It was his greatest pleasure to instruct a youngster in the science of deer-stalking, salmon-fishing and shooting—instruction

which no one was more qualified to offer. No kinder, truer friend ever existed to those who were worthy of his friendship, tuition and assistance, in all matters of sport. His loss to me was irreparable, for I respected and idolized him. It is many years now since he passed away, and since that time we have again had to mourn the loss of his son, the late Simon Lord Lovat, who was, in truth, a worthy successor to his father, and possessed all the many virtues of the latter. A more thorough Christian gentleman, a truer friend, or a more finished all-round sportsman, perhaps never lived. I cannot adequately describe the universal grief it was to his relatives, friends and tenantry, when he who was the life and soul and leading spirit in every undertaking for the benefit of all around him was cut off in the very prime of life ; and I think that his sudden death was one of the heaviest troubles which I have, even in a long life of many griefs, ever experienced. Doubtless he was one of the most perfect of men, and not only was he so acknowledged to be by all his friends, but even by those whose interests were opposed to his. These one and all were forced to acknowledge that a more perfectly just man never existed ; and if this was the opinion of those who knew his external life only, it may be well imagined how great an affection I, who almost lived with him for many years, entertained for him.

‘The late Right Honourable Simon, fifteenth Baron Lovat, was born in 1828, and succeeded to the title and property of his father, Baron Thomas Alexander Lovat, in 1875. He was honorary colonel of the Second Battalion of the Queen’s Own Cameron High-

landers, aide-de-camp to her Majesty the Queen, and Lord-Lieutenant of Inverness. He married in 1866 Alice Mary, daughter of Mr. Thomas Weld-Blundell, of Ince Blundell Hall, near Liverpool. Of athletic build, and possessed of great nerve, Lord Lovat was, from his youth, devoted to sport of all kinds, and, like his father, he was wonderfully proficient with rifle, gun, and rod. As a deer-stalker he had few, if any, equals after his father's death, and certainly no superior, as stalking is carried on in the Highlands; and on the Lovat estate, which, with its deer forests, grouse moors, and salmon fishings, is one of the best sporting properties in North Britain, he had ample scope for enjoying his favourite sports. About twenty-four years ago Lord Lovat killed a deer called "Square Toes," which he had been endeavouring to get a stalk at for fifteen years. In years gone by he was well known at the National Rifle Association at Wimbledon. He is credited with having performed the greatest feat ever done with a rifle, as in 1859 he hit the target nineteen times out of twenty at 2,000 yards. He was also a skilful angler, and once landed 146 salmon in five days. He was the author of the chapters on "Deer-stalking" and "Deer Forests," in the Badminton Library.

'He once made a bet that he would land a trout with a cobweb, and he performed this extraordinary feat in the presence of many friends, including the loser of the bet.

'As a resident landlord Lord Lovat had no superior. He had the best interests of his numerous tenants at heart, and was much esteemed by them. He farmed a considerable portion of his estates himself, and consequently was able to appreciate the difficulties and un-

certainties inseparable from the tilling of the soil. Lord Lovat was always found in his place in the House of Lords when matters affecting Scotland were discussed. He was, in fact, the truest type of the Highland gentleman.'—From the *County Gentleman*.

Lord Lovat leaves a widow and three sons and five daughters. His eldest son, Simon, who will succeed to the property in three years, is at present at Oxford. Let us earnestly hope that he may prove a worthy representative of his father. Young as he is, he promises to be so, and a valued head of the Clan of Fraser, and he has every opportunity for becoming great and good and universally beloved.

Yet another dear friend, Colonel the Hon. Alastair Edward Fraser of Lovat, and who saw a great deal of service in the Crimea, died previously to his brother, Lord Lovat, and, like the latter, was a veritable 'chip of the old block' in every particular. He was, as I can vouch for, as true as steel in times when his help and advice were needed. 'When I was weak he made me strong.' I can truly say this. The fact of writing these lines evokes sad memories. Three of my best friends gone, though the remembrance of them recalls the brighter side of many a picture in which they figured—pictures of affection, hope and promise, youth and ripening manhood, a united family and a loved home. I must not dwell further on such scenes as these, but all who read these lines may know that each and all of these my friends died with a happy confidence in God's great mercy. A happy death is easily recognised; when men die with such convictions it is easily visible on their countenances; they feel sure

they have done their duty before they meet with their eternal reward.

Nor is it a matter for surprise that these dear friends of mine should so die happily, when the wife and mother, who guided their footsteps from childhood to manhood, was the most perfect Christian lady I ever knew. She, too, soon followed her husband, and I am sure that nothing would be more contrary to the wishes of the Dowager Lady Lovat than that I should write up her life as being anything more than quiet and uneventful, and I must perforce respect her wishes. Nothing I could say would adequately express how great a loss her death occasioned the poor and numerous friends whom she assisted. Their name is legion. She was too well known for it to be necessary for me to refresh minds which can never forget, so long as life lasts, the perfect mother who brought up such sons as Simon Lovat and Alastair Fraser. My object here is to express gratitude and love for all that gentle lady did for those with whom she came in contact. She afforded us a priceless example.

I have written the above lines out of affection and respect for kind and valued friends ; but I thank God that He was pleased to soften and hallow their last moments, trusting that my own may be like theirs.

Colonel Alastair Fraser was a notoriously fine shot, but never cared for fresh-water angling. He used to say that it tried his temper more than any other sport, and I certainly have often shared his opinion on hopeless days, which try the temper of a fisherman sorely. He loved danger, and his courage was well tested on many occasions ; but his greatest trials were from fever,

ague, and dysentery in a pestilential climate, and followed by a winter of cold, hunger, and want generally, for by day and night the Scots Guards were, like the rest, attacked in the trenches. Many thrilling accounts are recorded of his hair-breadth escapes in the Crimea. He was present at three engagements. His sword arm was shot away, his neck grazed, and he was hit in the chest by a ball, which struck a relic of the true Cross, which either his wife or his mother had given him, the bullet leaving only a mark and inflicting no wound. We all heard of the soldier-like qualities he displayed—obedience, pluck, and fortitude; and his cheerful bearing in illness and suffering served to help those who were suffering around him. Who that ever saw him dance at the Northern meeting can forget that shrivelled leg, which proved what he must have so patiently suffered? Until the false calf which he wore turned to the front after the first few steps of the reel, none but his friends would have known that one leg was not as strong as the other, and no one enjoyed the joke better than he when he had to dance all night with his calf in front. Although often suffering great pain, his cheerful bearing was remarkable. I will say no more than that he left a wife who bore and bears her irreparable loss with true Christian fortitude. These sad memories belong to her alone, and I will not, therefore, further dwell on them or her sorrow, though the latter must have been changed to joy when she beheld him die a happy and resigned death. Though he suffered fearfully, the pain left him before his death, and he faced it all as if from stern duty, calmly bearing the agony he suffered. Life was dear to him, but its agony too great, and when told he was

dying he looked calmly at the olive trees at Gethsemane, and saw there a Figure bowed to the ground in the anguish of death, and with his Saviour he knelt in spirit and accepted that chalice, bitter though it was, with both his hands and all his heart. According to the words of the Rev. H. S. Bowden (late Scots Guards), who fought with him in the Crimea, and who was present when he died, 'Cum infirmor, tunc potens sum.'

CHAPTER V.

Driving the Sanctuary—A lucky miss—Another day with Mr. Winans—Going for a fall—When driving is superior to stalking—Fight between an eagle and a fox—Stalking in Paat Forest in 1888—Bad weather—Wire-fencing and wounded deer—An old, and over-canny stag—John Mathewson—Fight between two eagles—Eagles and deer—A cargo of venison—Bad heads at Morna and Strathconnon—A right and left.

I WAS once asked to join in a deer-drive, which, as good luck would have it, turned out to be the best ever known in the Strath-Farrar Forest.

In the time of the late Lord Lovat, and also that of his father, the Sanctuary, opposite the Braulen Lodge, had never been disturbed. The gillies were never allowed to go near it, unless a very good stag died near the outside of it, when they were permitted to go in and pull it out. When the late tenant, Mr. Winans, took it, he invited me to join his party, which consisted of ten rifles. One fine September morning, when the wind was north-east, the very best quarter for us, I drove up with him, starting at five o'clock from Phœnas House, which was next to my own shooting, and which Mr. Winans rented as a halfway-house, and where he spent some part of the stalking season, as he had not room at Braulen for his numerous guests. We drove in a light buggy, which was well horsed, and, after the American fashion, galloped all the way,

getting over the twenty-three miles in no time. The following guests were awaiting our arrival at John Ross's, the head-stalker's house, viz., Lord Lovat, Colonel Alastair and Colonel Henry Fraser of Lovat; Mr. Basil Fitzherbert, of Swinnerton Park; Major Bashford, 9th Lancers; and Captain Wade Brown, Scots Guards, who, with Mr. Winans, his two sons, and myself, made up the ten guns.

We were soon on our ponies, and away up the hill to our different bothies. Before we separated, and after we had left our ponies, Mr. Winans proposed that we should all draw lots for our passes, except as regards himself, as he wished, foolishly as I thought, to reserve a pass called the Lovat Pass for himself. I knew the wind was wrong for it; but fearing lest I might give offence, I said nothing. He might have taken the advice of his stalker, I thought; for he never saw a single beast all day. The rest of us drew lots; and as luck would have it, Colonel Henry Fraser and I drew about the best two passes on the whole drive. I shall never forget the number of deer we saw that day. What with hinds and calves, some four or five thousand deer must have moved out of the Sanctuary on that, the first time it had been driven for forty years. I can hardly describe what my feelings were, when the first lot of stags came to me, and stopped blown, within twenty yards. One fine stag was so fat and so blown that he stopped in front of my bothy for five minutes, recovering his wind. He was so close, and remained so still, that I could have shot him with a gun; but I had to consider what harm I might do if I chanced to prevent the deer going, as they were going, straight towards the gun on my right.

If I had fired, they would in all probability have gone down-hill out of shot, although we had 'stops' placed to prevent them; but deer soon get used to such tactics, and frequently break past a 'stop' when they will not go near the guns at any price. It was as well that I did not give way to greed, for they went on straight to the gun on the right, when he opened fire on them with two rifles, and turned them back to me. Then it was my turn to have at them, and between us we killed our share.

My horror may be imagined when a big, wide 'caberslack' (a head without points, and having only brow-antlers), which I had kept my eye on from the commencement, being wounded, and having gone to lie down to die exactly between the two bothies which were next to mine, I saw the gun in one of the bothies rise and fire at the dying stag, exactly in a line with the other bothy. No one in their senses would, I thought, fire in such a reckless way, and, in fear and trembling I awaited the result, which was, that the bullet struck the top of Captain Bashford's bothy. That gentleman jumped up, took off his cap, and waved it to show his whereabouts. It was, if a ludicrous, a rather ghastly episode, for Captain Bashford had a very close shave of being shot through the head, as the bullet, so he afterwards told me, struck the top of his bothy just three inches above his head; and just at the time he waved his hat, he had the misfortune to turn some two hundred stags towards us. Seeing him disappear with a jerk, when it was too late to warn him, the mischief having been done, I asked him why he did so so suddenly. He replied, 'It was the gillie who was with me, who seized me by the coat-tails, saying, "Sit you

doon, sir; the gentleman's other barrel is not off yet!" What makes it still more amusing was that both of them being soldiers, the gillie expressed his belief to his friends afterwards that they were only practising professionally by firing at each other, and as he feared he might get hit himself, he pulled his man out of danger. The result of the day's sport was thirty-one stags, all with good heads, and we might have shot a hundred.

A month or two later, Mr. Winans sent me an invitation to go up with him again the day following, provided the wind was north-east; and I accordingly went. Before we started, he used some very strong language to his butler for not having sent out sufficient luncheon, and I remarked, 'There is no luck in using such strong expressions;' and sure enough I was right, for on nearing Dany, a place where the horses were usually fed and rested, the latter, which were going full gallop, turned sharp round to the stable-yard before Mr. Winans could collect himself. I unbuttoned and loosed the apron, and threw myself out, carrying Mr. Winans with me; for I saw that the wheel must go over a bank and upset the trap, which event did occur, and the buggy was smashed into match-wood in about five seconds. It was turned right over; and the horses kicked it to bits, leaving the wheels and axle together; one horse going up to Dany with the pole, and the other, jumping the bank, galloping back six miles to Struy. It was a pretty considerable go; we had six miles yet to travel, and Mr. Winans was swearing that his shoulder was dislocated—altogether, a fine result, due, I suppose, to the 'prayers' before starting. We were lucky enough to

procure a spring trap, and drove on, and found the same party as on the previous occasion, wondering what on earth had happened to us. We soon discovered that, save a shaking, we were none the worse, and so we went on to our old places, and of course, just as I expected, only secured five middling beasts. Despite my assurance that this would be the case, Mr. Winans would not believe me. 'I guess, friend,' he said, 'we shall have just as good sport as we had the first day, as the wind is from the same quarter.'

If I had attempted to seize the reins and to help Mr. Winans stop the horses on that memorable occasion, we must both have been killed, for the horses kicked the trap so rapidly to bits. He held his reins loose, thinking that he was driving American horses; I had no time to say anything, and so 'rode for a fall,' and carried him out with me, but I could not fall clear of him with a lot of heavy rugs tripping me up, and so fell partly on him, for which he often jokingly abuses me, when I tell him 'that lucky fall saved his life,' thereby reversing the usual order of things.

Where stalking is carried on with the help of professionals there is more true sport in shooting driven deer than in so stalking them. In the drive a man must calculate the distance for himself, and select the deer with the best head, unless he is a child 'with arms,' or 'in arms': therefore, unless he has a nurse, in the shape of a professional, beside him, as most men have, he is a very much better sportsman than the usual run of stalkers who require such assistance.

A friend of mine, while waiting at a pass when shooting hinds in the snow, witnessed a very remarkable fight. He and his keeper had borrowed some

petticoats, etc., from the latter's wife, and clad themselves in white, so as not to be visible to the deer. Whilst waiting for the beaters to drive the hinds to them, they observed a fine greyhound fox burrowing and disappearing in the snow, all except its brush; this went on for some ten minutes, when it was seen to drag something, which proved to be a white hare, out of the snow. The fox killed it and retired to a rock where the snow was thin and the wind had left a bare spot, where he prepared to enjoy a warm meal on so cold a day. While they were watching this performance through their glasses, my friend observed the fox look up suddenly into the sky and then scratch the hare under him with his feet. Down came an eagle, which they had not noticed, to claim his share of the feast, and a desperate engagement, which lasted fully ten minutes, ensued. The eagle attacked the fox with its beak and wings, and the latter retaliated when he could by taking a bunch of feathers out of the eagle's breast; but the fox was unable to withstand the attacks made on him by the eagle from above, and after a time gave in to the combined blows of the wings and talons of the eagle, and had to shift off from the hare. The eagle immediately seized the opportunity, and pouncing on the hare, carried it off, leaving 'our friend Mr. Reynard' to find another hare for his dinner, if, as is doubtful, he was, after his encounter, in a fit condition to do so.

The above strange battle was witnessed by Mr. Colin Ross, son of the late Mr. Horatio Ross, and he told me that when the fox snapped at the eagle he took quite a handful of feathers out of his breast.

In 1888 I was stalking in Paat Forest, and by reason of a snowstorm we were obliged to go out with nightshirts over our coats and white handkerchiefs on our caps. Many people will doubtless remember how very early the snow fell that year, indeed, it was earlier than the oldest gillies could remember. It was in the most disconsolate tone that the stalker called me at daylight, for he thought that we should be doomed to perhaps a week's confinement to the lodge. However, after cheering him up as best I could, a cold tub, and a good breakfast, I went up to my room and put on a nightshirt over my coat, and taking another on my arm, appeared at the hall door. John Mathewson, the veteran keeper, was there, waiting for me outside, for all the world as if it were a fine summer's day, with no overcoat on, and nothing but his great beard and pipe to keep the snow out and console him. He exclaimed, 'Oh, man! but Mr. C. will have sport,' and he quite cheered up at once. I offered him the other nightshirt, but instead of accepting it he said, 'I'm thinking my wife's will fit me best.' The lady, however, did not quite see it in the same light; but it did not matter whether she did or not; I gave my second shirt to the gillie, and away we went, stalking for the first time in my life in snow, the latter so deep as at times to come over our hips, and many a gully poor John, who was in front of me, tumbled into up to his neck, where the snow had drifted. I never saw it worse even when hind-shooting. I have been in many forests in my time, but never did I experience such a wet time as we had during this visit to Paat. It snowed three days running, and then rained for three days,

and then a burn which we had to cross nearly every day, and where there was no kind of bridge, got flooded. Those ten days were a rough time, but as far as sport went I was well repaid, for I got eleven shots at stags and six hinds, and so did very well; but stalking stags in soft snow is twice the labour of shooting driven hinds. We had no drivers, and only John and his lad of fifteen, so that when I shot a beast I was obliged to leave him behind to 'gralloch' it, and let him track and follow me as best he could, or make to where he heard me shoot. There were no roads or pony-tracks in the forest, so that we could not use a pony, except for a very short distance on the north side and round a part of the lower ground; it is the softest forest I know. Up to the time of my visit it had never been properly stalked, and had been recently given up to the laird (sub-let to the late Lord Lovat) by Mr. Winans, who had fenced it in like his nine other forests, and there was an enormous quantity of deer collected there in October that year; but after the fence was pulled down Morna and Strathconnon forests were stocked with some fine heads. Many a time I have seen deer in herds trying to cross these unsportsmanlike, diabolical fences; and one day during the rutting season I saw a stag in such a fury that in making a rush at another champion he cut himself most terribly on his breast and the point of his shoulder. I afterwards went down from the top of Paat to the marsh to see if it was much hurt, and I could trace the blood for more than a mile along the fence and where the straining-post had cut the poor beast open. It had wandered along the fence for miles, trying to get over to a large

herd of hinds on my side of the fence, where there was only a middling stag challenging him to battle. As the wounded stag was on the Attadale ground I could not have fired at the unfortunate beast even if I could have overtaken it. Baron Von Schroeder was the lessee, and as I had never had the pleasure of meeting that good sportsman, I was forced to let the poor animal go and probably drag out a miserable existence.

My right of stalking extended only to Paat, Riochan, and Corryeach. The foul wind blowing from the north-west, from Paat to Riochan and Corryeach, was the most puzzling I ever had to deal with ; blowing into our faces from Paat, the moment it got behind us on to either of the other two places, it blew back again into the deer we were trying to stalk. It took us quite four days before we were able to make it out, and the best stag I saw got a foul whiff, and I never got a shot at him. This same stag was shot the next season by General Crealock, but the stalking had been made much easier then, as Sir K. Mathewson, the Laird, had done everything in his power to make it so, and had granted every expense for roads, bridges, keeper's house, etc., and had the objectionable fence removed, thereby allowing the herds of deer, previously so troublesome when stalking, to get out. When I wrote to Sir Kenneth Mathewson I hardly knew him, but he followed out every suggestion I offered, and so I was able to recommend one of the best stocked small forests of some 14,000 acres in Scotland to my friends, but none but a thorough sportsman could stand the wet there. The forest ought to yield at least some forty-five stags annually, and as the Kintail

deer also visit the ground, there must be some of the finest wild heads in Scotland to be got, owing to the long jubilee of nine years which Mr. Winans has given his deer. It appears that this liberal gentleman has given up deer-driving, and has very much improved the herds on many forests, such as Kintail, Corrynachalan, Fasnakyle, Corrie Hallie, Cannick, Dorusduan, the south side of Glasletter, Glen Affrick, Glomack, Luibnadamp. No man ever before owned such an amount of forests, not since the days of our forefathers, when one might shoot over the whole of the Highlands without let or hindrance, save from the poachers of those days.

The foregoing list of enclosed forests will give the reader some idea of the number of deer I saw, and which were trying to get to Attadale, Morna, and South Conon. Now that they have been allowed to get away, some fine heads have been killed by some of my friends, so that I am as well rewarded as if I had secured them myself.

Though I had killed eleven very fat stags at Paat, my mouth watered to stalk one or two magnificent beasts, one a fourteen pointer as big in the horn as an elk. I wasted four days trying to stalk him, but could not succeed. These stags at any time take good care of themselves, and keep to the centre of the herd, but every time I moved I came across scores of deer, and as for grouse, as an Irishman once expressed himself to me, 'They darkened the sun every five minutes.' The number of grouse was due to the sudden snow-storm in the early part of the season having driven them down on Paat from the higher ground for shelter. There was this big stag and four others, and there was

no chance of getting a shot at them without driving them, and this was strictly forbidden, and would, with so many fences, have been very unsportsmanlike, so I had to remain content with what I had got. I could easily have shot a score more stags all as fat as bullocks, but I hardly know how we managed to get the meat home as it was, and John must have done the work of five men. I never knew a more willing, good fellow, and I only hope he will be well treated as long as he lives. When I arrived at Lake Morna the first night, to be taken up to the lodge, during the long row of six miles, he and I, when talking of stalking, found ourselves looking rather hard at each other, and at last something he mentioned recalled to my memory, when looking up at Scour-na-Lapich, that I had shot a deer on the top of it, which spot I could see from the boat. The circumstance had happened some seventeen years previously. 'I was just thinking,' said John, 'that Mr. C. was in it, for I was the gillie with you that same day.' Time had so altered us that we failed to recognise each other, and it was by chance we did so, though doubtless in a day or two, with the Scour in sight of us all day—for it is, I believe, the second or third highest mountain in the Highlands—one or other of us would most probably have mentioned the occurrence. It is much easier stalking on that ground than on Paat, or Corryeach and Riochan, for there is such a large open corrie on the latter ground, extending for miles, that not only does the wind trouble the stalker in three different places, but most of the stalking has to be done from the top, and it is perpetual climbing up and down hill. The corrie itself is too open, and the ground is not

rough enough in the best feeding parts, and many a fine beast from Kintail found himself as safe there as in any sanctuary. I have watched the herds there in hundreds, for hours, the best stags being safely guarded by their hinds and the younger stags, without being able to move, and if but a bird or a hare startled them, they were off, and it was impossible to crawl within range of them. I once got within 500 yards of the big Wapiti-headed stag, but I never got nearer, and had only the satisfaction of surveying his magnificent beam through my glass. I hear that Mr. A. Merry, of Belladrum, has shot just such a head in Strathconnon. I sincerely trust it is this one, but as yet I have not had an opportunity of seeing it.

One day whilst John and I, clad in our white garments, were sitting behind a rock covered with snow, waiting for some hinds to feed out of sight, two eagles, which were fighting most desperately, almost lighted on our heads. We kept as quiet as possible, and witnessed the most tremendous combat between the birds in the air, as they did not seem to like wetting their feathers in the snow. The fight lasted some ten minutes, and not only astonished us, but the hinds also, which latter made off, and gave us a much longer stalk in the snow than we should otherwise have had. We waited to see the end of the fight, and at last the younger bird, a bird of about two years old, began to show signs of giving in. As eagles are getting scarce, I raised my hand slowly when they were within five yards of me, thinking that the old warrior would give in perhaps, but not a bit of it; the younger bird tried to let go and fly away, but the elder one held on, and the fight continued all across

the corrie, the younger bird flying upside down, his talons being firmly fixed in the old bird, which held tightly by the latter, and thus they crossed over the corrie into a small burn about half a mile off, and disappeared from our view. I much fear that the younger bird must have succumbed after such merciless treatment. Evidently he was an interloper in the district, and had followed the deer and hares from the higher ground when the snow came, and had gone too close to the eyrie of the older bird, which has been left untouched for years in Killilan.

It is well known that both eagles and falcons drive their young away to find eyries for themselves in other forests, and I have often seen desperate fights on such occasions ; but I much doubt if anyone has ever before or since witnessed a fight between two eagles, where one was flying upside down by reason of their being so firmly locked together.

In some forests, where the rocks are steep and the eagles thereby get the chance, I have seen them attack deer, but I never saw them succeed in getting a deer over a rock. On one occasion an eagle attacked a hind with a calf close to a very steep rock, but the old hind was too wary, for she saw the eagle coming and called the calf to her, and the latter got close under her as she ran back from the rock. Eagles will not attack a deer save for sport, or unless they are very hard pressed for food where hares are scarce. Now and again I have seen them hunt everything—black-game, grouse, and deer into the woods, but it was evidently only for amusement, for they have not the power of stooping rapidly like falcons. They fly at a hare more like the manner in which a hen harrier

beats a turnip-field, and now and again, when so running a hare, they have been known to pounce on another which considered itself safe in its form. I have killed hares with a goshawk; the latter is fleetier than an eagle, which is a somewhat awkward bird. I have trained them for hare-hunting, but they are too clumsy to carry, and cannot fly off the hand or 'cadge' without the assistance of a strong breeze to fill their sails, much like wild swans off a loch. No bird is, perhaps, more easily shot than a wild swan when it is trying to mount off the water in still weather.

Although the weather during my stay at Paat was so wet, being worse in that respect than any which I have ever experienced, even on the west coast of Ireland, the boat, on our return to Morna Lodge, was so full of venison that the water almost came over the gunwale. Five days' shooting had given a result of eleven stags and six hinds, and there was only just room for us to sit in the boat. John had done his work admirably, and every haunch was beautifully packed for the journey. I regret to think that I shall never see him or Paat again, for it is not likely that it will be let to anyone of my acquaintance, but most probably taken by some tenant on a long lease, and whoever is fortunate enough to secure it will most likely keep it as long as possible.

On our arrival at Morna we received but very middling accounts of the deer they had got, being so poor; but this was the case in Strathconnon also that year. However, matters have very much improved since then, and, owing to the removal of the twelve-foot fence, no better were ever seen either there or at

Morna than at present. May such long continue to be the case, for no better sportsmen exist than Mr. Stirling and his sons.

As far as the heads were concerned, I never had worse luck than with those deer which I got while at Paat, considering the number. Doubtless, had there been fewer deer the heads would have been very good. The day of the eagle fight I got a right and left at two good bodied stags, weighing 16 and 17 stone respectively.

CHAPTER VI.

Deer-stalking rifles—Rifle sights and sighting—Rifle covers and safety stops—Care of rifle after stalking—Telescopes, makers, etc.—Deer-stalking clothes—How to diet for stalking—Absurd luxury—Stalking shoes—Waist-belt—Pockets—Sight of deer—Disadvantages of unbound telescopes—Crossing water—Stalking up wind—Varieties of ground in different forests—Stalking from higher ground—Stalking down wind—Use of bog-cotton—Varying currents of wind—Wind sanctuaries—Movements of leading hind to be observed—A horse-shoe of hinds—Inquisitive hinds—Shooting of troublesome hinds—How to shoot an inquisitive hind—Deer-stalking in hot weather—Sheep and goats—Moving deer clear of a stalk—Position for spying—The stalk—Thirst not to be indulged—Smoking—Firing up hill—Firing down hill—Spying down hill—Crawling up and down hill—Sighting up and down hill—Shooting galloping deer—Shooting in high wind—Long shots condemned as cruel—Wounded stag fed by hinds—Sir E. Landseer's belief in above statement—Concealment of stalker after wounding deer—Stag recovering after being apparently killed—Case of above happening to a friend of the author—Similar case occurring to a former Lord Lovat—Wounded stag to be speedily despatched—March law—Following wounded deer—Stag travelling six miles with a broken leg—Tracking dogs and tracking—Slow walking to be adhered to—Danger of approaching wounded stags—Deer-hounds—Oscar and Ocean—The Rev. Father Coll.

AT the present time the best rifle for red-deer-shooting is the .450 express; the average weight of this rifle is a little under 8 lb. The larger and heavier, .500 bore, is more suitable for tiger-shooting and such-like sport. Many makers are able to turn out both these bores nearly a pound lighter than formerly.

Messrs. Holland and Holland have lately brought out a rifle which they have named the 'Little Wonder;' and this rifle weighs barely seven and a quarter pounds; the barrel is only twenty inches in length, and it is altogether the handiest rifle I have ever used.

There are many various sights which are recommended by gunmakers; but practical experience has proved to the majority of the older sportsmen that there is nothing better than the thick V-shaped sight, sighted for 100 yards; when shooting at any distances under that, a finer sight must be taken. For shots of from 30 to 60 yards, the fore-sight must be aligned under the heart, if the deer is standing broadside on, but of course a fuller or finer sight must be taken according to the distance. A full-sight at 100 yards, will serve for 125 yards distance; indeed, many makers, such as Messrs. Henry, Holland and Holland, Rigby, and Charles Lancaster, construct the oval-bore express rifles so as to admit of their being used at all distances, from 50 to 200 yards, with the one sight.

It is advisable to have sights which are removable, for at times the light in some woods is so bad that it is difficult to see the enamel, platina, or whatever such kind of material may be used for the sight. Ivory is the best for such occasions; and if kept in the box made for it, and which is made to fit into the heel-plate of the rifle, it will keep white for years. I always kept a supply of such sights in a waterproof tissue-paper, which prevented air, wet, or any oil soiling the whiteness of the ivory. Some people have tried the effects of luminous paint, but the result has been indifferent as compared to ivory sights well kept. Bar-sights are not suited for quick shooting at deer;

nor can I say that I approve of the telescope sight for sporting purposes, however satisfactory they may be for target-shooting.

Rifle-covers should be made of soft, waterproof tweed, which is noiseless when being removed. These covers should be made some three or four times too large at the stock end, so as to allow of the hand being readily passed into the cover and the rifle grasped above the trigger-guard, so as not to lose an instant in case of emergency. Many an easy chance at a stag has been lost to the stalker by reason of the rifle-cover being too tight, and the rifle thereby sticking at the critical moment.

In my opinion all rifles should have hammers, for the latter serve as a guide to the eye when firing in a hurry, and at once show if the rifle is level and the back-sight upright, as it should be. Hammers, too, are safer, and serve to show whether a rifle is at full or half cock. Rebounding locks are by far the safest and best.

Every sporting rifle should have stops for bolting the triggers, and these should push FORWARD when it is desired to bolt the locks, and the reverse when required to fire; for they can be drawn back almost by the same motion as that made by the hand when seeking for the trigger-guard, the eye of the firer being frequently of necessity fixed on the deer, which latter may be also gazing at him, and ready to detect the slightest motion of the eye when being, so to speak, 'stared out of countenance.'

The cover should always be kept on the rifle when any crawling after deer has to be done, and the rifle should always be carried by the leader, and so no

accident will be likely to occur ; but rifles nowadays should never be loaded when in the open forest, until just before firing.

When going through woods, or thick brushwood, the rifle should be out of the cover, except in wet weather, and the stalker should always be in *front* of the gillie or keeper.

When the stops are put forward, care should be taken to see that the rifle is at half-cock, and this should never be done until after the click of the half-cock is heard, as I have several times known rifles go off when the stops have been pulled back, the nose of the 'sear' not having entered the 'half-bent,' and this has happened with rifles by some of the very best makers, and is entirely due to the way in which the hammers have been held back in order to prevent the 'click' being heard by deer. It is easily possible to half-cock, so as to avoid the full or ringing sound of well-made locks being heard by the deer, and yet perfectly audible to the user of the rifle ; and this is useful knowledge when stalking geese, ducks, rabbits, and such-like.

The cover of a rifle should be made of material stiff enough to stand away from the rifle when wet, and not cling to the latter, as is too frequently the case. It should be soft enough to prevent noise when rubbing against the heather, and yet stiff enough to allow of the hand being as readily inserted in wet as in dry weather, free enough to admit of the rifle coming out in one motion, when the hand reaches the hammers, and to prevent their catching in the cover.

The sportsman will do well to see to the well-being of his rifle, even before he changes his wet clothes. This is the motto of the genuine deer-stalker ; and I

have never seen a professional stalker take off a stitch of wet clothing until the rifle was safe over the fireplace in the gun-room.

As I have said before, all rifles should be returned to the maker at the end of the season; for no good and well-known maker is anything but pleased to see that his rifles get a fair chance of excelling in the forest. The grooving requires to be carefully looked to annually, so that no clogged oil may have done harm to it.

Next to the rifle, a telescope is the most important adjunct to the deer-stalker, and without a really *first-rate* glass, the stalker will be altogether 'out of it.' It is very exciting work, too, 'spying' against a good stalker, when the stakes are a sovereign for the first 'royal' or good stag spied; so that it is a saving of money; but in order to effect this, he must possess a better glass than most of the keepers, for the latter can generally tell where the deer ought to be lying after one glance at the wind.

The very best glass I have ever had is one made for night-work when yachting, by Messrs. Spencer and Sons, 19, Grafton Street, Dublin; a binocular. Nothing could possibly be better; and I regret that so many of my friends who have written to the firm have had no reply to their letters, as I fear they must have given up the business. Next to the above-named makers are Messrs. Ross, of Bond Street, whose glasses are so well known; but I purchased a glass from Messrs. Negretti and Zambra, of Regent Street, for £6 which is equal in every respect, size of field, etc., to the glass which Messrs. Ross charge £9 for. The 'Little Wonder' is also a very useful, light glass.

Aluminium glasses are all very well for yachting in calm weather, but are too light for use on the top of some of the hills, such as Scour-na-Lapich, etc., and are often nearly blown out of one's hand. With the binocular I have made mention of I have often saved the loss of many a sovereign, for its field is very large and covers any amount of ground.

After spying for years through a Ross, or any other glass, and using one eye only, that eye, in middle and old age, becomes naturally weaker; therefore the use of a good binocular, such as I have spoken of, is invaluable; and there must be many makers who are capable of turning out a glass equally good as my own in every particular, if they take the trouble.

This weakening of the eye constantly used is a very serious drawback to the use of telescopes, as after a time the left eye, where the sight is termed 'long-sight,' becomes the 'master eye,' and the right eye, becoming gradually weaker, very much militates against quick shooting with both eyes open. A binocular is just as light as, and indeed lighter than, a telescope, and is capable of being very much improved upon for deer-stalking purposes, and by its use the sight of one eye cannot be tried more than that of the other, and both will wear equally well until old age prevents the deer-stalker from using his legs.

Possibly the foregoing remarks may induce opticians to turn out something which is light, and handy when crawling after deer.

Nothing is more irritating than a wet glass when on the hill; therefore a glass should never be used until the mist or rain has cleared off, and nothing is more trying to the eye than a dim or dirty glass.

Next to the rifle and glass, good, loose, and comfortable clothing is of the greatest consequence, and the greatest comfort and satisfaction are obtainable by going to a good, sporting Highland tailor, such, for instance, as Robert Fraser, who makes for nearly all the Highland regiments, and who can make either a kilt or a coat more suitable for sporting purposes than any of the Southern tailors, whose only idea is to fit their customers with a flattering get-up. I have of late years seen the most absurd exhibitions: dozens of finely-proportioned young Englishmen most elegantly dressed in the most perfectly-fitting clothes and knickerbocker-breeches, the latter being buttoned tightly at the knee. Now such a get-up is precisely the very opposite to that which all practical stalkers make use of. It is *imperative* to have perfect freedom when climbing up and descending hills, and the fact of being tied up at the knee prevents any freedom of movement, and is utterly useless save on the back of a hill-pony. If the clothes of a deer-stalker are not light and loose he can neither get his rifle up to the shoulder nor crawl with any degree of comfort, and after the first soaking day his clothes become too tight to move in. The stalker must be dressed so that every garment is two or three sizes too large for him, and his knickerbockers must be quite free at the knees, and not made, to button, if he hopes for comfort; and without comfort he can have very little chance of keeping near to his guide, and infinitely less chance of hitting a stag when he is pumped out with tight clothes on.

I have seen a well-known stalker pull out his knife and rip up a new coat in several places before he attempted to go uphill, nor shall I ever forget the

prayers he offered for his London tailor on that occasion.

It is, therefore, of the very first importance to be efficiently turned out, and yet at the same time without any discomfort or useless encumbrances.

A light, thin cloth overcoat is all the extra clothing which the stalker requires to keep him warm (not dry) on the skyline when having to wait, or spy, for deer, etc.; for many such delays would cause him to be 'perished with cold' if of long duration. A short hunting covert-coat, well soaked in alum, sugar-of-lead, and zinc, will keep him warm enough.

Every forest has its own special colour for cloth, and Robert Fraser, of Inverness (and many other tailors also), can supply the best coloured tweeds, which do not have a black appearance when they are wet. Messrs. Murray and Watson, of Inverness, also turn out the sportsman very well, and have many very useful improvements in such gear. They are, at the present time, the most enterprising tailors in Inverness. Of the London tailors, I can assure my readers, from my own experience, that Messrs. Holt, of Sackville Street, will not sacrifice comfort for the sake of appearance, and they have made me many a suit of invisible cloth.

Every stalker (dukes and millionaires excepted) who really means to 'go,' and does not desire to sit down and have deer driven to him, must take care how he trains himself for the purpose. for if he indulges too freely at any time, but especially between breakfast and dinner, his health and nerves must suffer; and nothing affects the action of the heart more than carelessness in eating and drinking. I can make mention

of more than one sudden death which arose from disregard to the above rules, and many instances where men have injured themselves seriously from a sudden burst uphill when not fit for the work, the heart being thereby overstrained.

Young men should make it a hard and fast rule to eat (though not to starve) as little as possible between breakfast and dinner. There is a happy medium in all things, and nothing can well be worse than stalking on a full stomach.

It is nowadays quite a common thing to hear of millionaires having champagne luncheons and five or six attendants, one with dry stockings, another carrying dry boots, a third with a cushion and a rug, and, unless I am mistaken, in one instance one such individual, as soon as he got his feet wet, then and there changed his stockings, having relays of gillies to meet him at every point, with everything he could possibly require, during those extraordinary deer-drives, which must have afforded him far less pleasure, in the butchery of every wretched little beast which chanced to show itself, no matter how young, than fear of catching cold; and then calling such sport!

It is hardly to be wondered at that the individual to whom I here refer took good care to keep his performances dark from all save his own immediate circle, for no one else was ever asked to enjoy (*sic*) his monster carnage; and he was doubtless well aware that the majority of people would not call such slaughter sport. Some of the stories told of him by his servants, though quite true, appear almost incredible.

There is, as most stalkers are aware, and as I have

remarked, far more real sport in shooting driven deer than in enacting the rôle of 'twin serpent' to a professional, and a drive, well organized, may be made a very sporting affair, and be a very good test of a man's knowledge in selecting the best stags, as well as shooting them. But it is a vastly different thing to be surrounded by attendants with every conceivable luxury, and to have deer driven close up to the guns by hundreds. Such exhibitions as these have been taking place of late years, and have done more to injure and degrade sportsmen in the eyes of the world than enough; and it is quite time that people should speak out, and prevent any further repetition of such degrading work, which is enough to cause such men as Scrope and Horatio Ross to turn in their very graves, and to cause a revolution against deer-forests throughout the kingdom.

As for other shooting, so also for deer-stalking, it is most unwise to wear new shoes, and they are far better for the purpose for which they are required when made by the local men, who make for all the keepers, etc., in their several districts. They should be at least a year old, and well worn, for otherwise the stalker will find himself very heavily handicapped, and to such an extent that if he is unable, by reason of living in town, etc., to wear them himself except during the shooting season, it is, even though perhaps an unpleasant remedy, far better to get someone else to break them in for him, so as to be ready for him to use when the 12th arrives. I have many a time had occasion to pity the victims of London waterproof boot-makers; my own first day's grouse-shooting (alas! long ago) caused me to lose the best part of the

season, and condemned me to a six weeks' rest in slippers.

Amongst other useful impedimenta, a belt, which is made to run through some two or three small leather bags, the latter being looped to admit of the former being passed through them, is very useful for the purpose of carrying a pipe, tobacco, sandwiches, and other small articles, and to keep them dry, which no coat, however well waterproofed, can do. But it is as well to here remark that the presence of any very hard article, when crawling or rolling over a rock, etc., may inflict serious damage on the wearer's ribs.

All pockets should be made to button, and a well-seasoned walking-staff is a *sine quâ non* when running downhill, as also equally necessary when feeling one's way home in the dark over rough ground.

In high wind, deer can scent a man a mile distant, and indeed, as I have frequently experienced, at times even further. The sight of deer is not very good, and I have constantly stalked them in full view, without the assistance of any cover to hide me; but they can at once observe any quick, sudden movement, and are very ready to discern a man. A brass telescope, or one unbound or stained by the action of the sun, is very readily seen by them, and it is therefore unwise to use such for stalking.

When it is necessary to cross a burn by wading through it, even though the stalker may be in full view, provided he moves slowly, the chances are that the deer may not detect his presence, but if the sun breaks on him, he must remain motionless. I have at times suffered martyrdom from cold and cramp, by reason of being thus forced to stand still for an hour

or more in an uncomfortable position ; but the slightest movement is fatal on such occasions, for the broken surface of the water is at once detected. Although deer may be a long distance from the stalker, the latter should never enter water up wind, and it is always safer to enter a burn a long way down-wind from the deer, and work up to them either in or outside the burn, according to circumstances. If anything happened to frighten the deer during the stalk, they might possibly cross the wind up the burn to the very spot where it might be wished to cross over to them.

If there is sufficient daylight remaining, and the ground admits of it, it is always safer to commence stalking as far down-wind as possible. I have more frequently lost than gained by making too bold a stalk, for there is always a danger of moving deer which may be further down-wind than those which are being stalked. However, it happens now and again that it is necessary to resort to desperate measures, owing to the nature of the ground, or other deer being in the way. There are so many things to be considered, and circumstances vary so much, that nothing but experience can determine the particular line of action which it may be necessary to adopt, and theory is utterly useless.

Some forests are much more difficult to stalk than others. Round hills are also the most difficult, and as a rule such ground necessitates shooting at longer range than where hills are rough, pointed and high, in which latter event the deer will be found on the sides, the heavy stags being below them, and the hinds will be on the look-out higher up. When such is the case, it is the best plan for the stalker to get up above the

deer as high as possible, as they never look up unless they are watching deer above them, or their attention is attracted from their watching by an eagle, fox, hare, etc., overhead. When I was at Paat, I secured ten stags in ten shots, including three 'rights and lefts,' by means of stalking from the very top of the hills and crawling down amongst the loose stones and rocks; and although, had but one stone rolled away from its place, even ever so small a one, every deer would have been off, not to be seen again that day, and the stalk therefore have been spoiled, I managed, by dint of serpentineing on my back, and feeling the loose stones with my hands and heels, to slide down quietly, and so obtained five stags one day, three another, and two on a third, the time on the latter day being much wasted by reason of my constantly tumbling into the snow-wreaths and holes, whence John Mathewson had to pull me out. It was also the day on which I witnessed the fight between the two eagles, so that with one thing and the other I was fortunate in getting two good beasts. Bad as the stalking on that hill was, the wind blew so hard on Riochan, that I was able to get two stags by trusting to the scent being blown over the deer, and so was actually enabled to get them down-wind. It was rather a rash thing to try, but it had been attempted several times with success in that large open corrie, and in other forests also, such as Rhidoroch, I have got stags by going straight down-wind on them. Under such circumstances it is necessary to get above the deer as high as feasible, and only by such means is it possible to get within range of them when the wind is blowing straight for them. Very often, however, it happens that the wind is

carried to the right or left of deer just as one gets within range, but none save a very old stalker is likely to find this out in time, and, as a rule, none but a stalker who knows the ground thoroughly, for no one in his senses would go straight down-wind at deer, unless he knew that the wind turned sharp round some rock or corrie just before he reached them, when, under such circumstances, it would be certain death to them if situated in what they believe to be a 'wind sanctuary.'

It is well to carry a small supply of bog-cotton in a pocket of the waistcoat, and this pocket should be lined with some waterproof material and reserved specially for this purpose, as it is necessary to keep the cotton dry. If the stalker has no cotton with him, a small quantity of wool pulled from his coat will, if the latter is dry, answer the purpose. By letting a small portion of the cotton or wool fly, any eccentricity there may be in the wind can be detected, and the difficulty of stalking very much lessened.

In some large, open, wide corries it is almost impossible to get near deer, and there are, in many forests, places where the wind is so erratic in its varied currents, no matter from what point it may generally be blowing, that the deer are absolutely safe, and such places are termed 'Wind Sanctuaries.' Stalking deer in such positions does no good, but infinite harm; for even though the stalker may be a mile distant, they will at once wind him and watch his approach from some high point. It is strange how they will keep to such spots; they doubtless are aware that they are in safety. It is difficult even to drive them from such points of vantage, for the herds will

remain to the very last in these eddies of wind, and generally contrive to bolt the wrong way for the guns. The best plan is to leave such ground perfectly quiet, and thereby afford the deer such a feeling of security that the best stags from the neighbouring forests may draw into such safe hiding ; and when they take to the hinds in October, some easy stalks at the best heads may be secured without disturbing the sanctuary at all. Anything is better than to disturb such places of refuge, as such disturbance will only tend to send the deer all over the country, the big stags perhaps never to return.

In stalking, the stalker should watch the movements of the leading hind or sentinel in every difficult stalk, and if he succeeds in out-manœuvring her, the rest of the herd, whose attention is generally fixed on her, require little further attention, and the stag which it is desired to obtain can generally be reached. As a rule there should be no excuse for other deer being in the way, for such should by right be spied with the glass when the ground is being examined previous to the stalk. In thick covert, of course, if a roe or any other deer jumps up it cannot be helped ; but where the ground is open, and can be thoroughly spied, failure should not happen, certainly from such a cause as the above. When stags are below the hinds, as they usually are in wild weather, it is safer to stalk them by working from above and under the wind of the hinds as the hill is descended.

On one occasion I succeeded in stalking a fine stag, it having taken me two hours to crawl three hundred yards, and just before I fired the other deer were round him in the form of a horseshoe, and a few

seconds' further delay must have caused some of them to wind me. Fortunately I was lucky enough to get the stag by making a long shot of 200 yards, after half a day's labour. He was a beauty, and the head the best I shot that season.

It is at times advisable to forego a stalk if the leading hind is inclined to be too inquisitive; for if the stag is a good one, and the leading hind comes down wind far enough to see the stalker lying down, she will probably take the stag away for the season, unless he at the time happens to have a harem belonging to the ground. Such has often happened by visitors in the forest for a day only compelling the stalker to stick to the stalk to the very last. Owners of forests, however, know better, and if a stag is with hinds which really belong to the ground, and the rutting season is just commenced, the shooting such a troublesome hind would probably ensure a shot at the stag a few days later on, as happened to myself in Rhidoroch. When a good stag is all but stalked, and such a hind makes it evident that she is about to spoil everything by her curiosity, I have found it answer to run away out of sight, and to keep on running while in sight, now and again stopping to look back. By pursuing such tactics the deer will be observed to get together in a lump, and only perhaps move up on to higher ground to look at the stalker as he goes away down some pass; and this is by far the safest plan to adopt if there is danger of a good stag, which is not settled with hinds, being scared off the ground.

If it is decided to shoot the leading hind, she should be allowed to come far back and away from the feeding herd, until she is quite close to the stalker, and in such

a position that she must fall in her tracks, and if possible, that the report may not re-echo against the rocks in the next corrie, where the deer are feeding. The stalker should, after firing, take care not to show himself for some time, for I have often seen deer quite puzzled as to what to do, not knowing where the shot was fired from ; and I have known them under such circumstances settle down to feed again in half an hour's time in the corrie next to the one they were in when the shot was fired. It is then an easy matter to drag the hind down to the nearest burn, gralloch her, and to return home by a track along which the deer are accustomed to see shepherds daily passing.

I have at times been unfortunate enough to have considerable trouble of this kind with hinds, where the forest has been constantly driven before stalking had been tried on the ground, and I would not, therefore, advise such decisive measures being made use of, save where the hinds are very old and cunning, and it is absolutely impossible to secure a stalk by other means.

It is more difficult to approach deer on fine warm days in the majority of forests, as they generally betake themselves to the hill-tops, in order to avoid the annoyance of flies, which the wind keeps away, and, where the hills are round, it takes a stalker all his time to circumvent them. It is unwise to attempt to stalk deer in such positions too early in the day, especially in high wind, for under such circumstances they will often make tracks for miles, and, should the stalker succeed in getting up to them a second time, he will find them all on the alert and very restless. On a calm day they are, as a rule, less wild, but all the same, it is

a bad plan to get at deer too early, before the lower ground has been well searched with the glass for the smaller herds which may be feeding, otherwise the latter may make off, if the weather is wild, to the larger herds and they all may go away out of the forest, and not return for some time. On such days it is far better to return home rather than run the risk of doing harm.

If a deer-forest is not cleared of sheep, the stalker will experience increased difficulty in getting near the deer, and nothing is more trying to the temper than the presence of sheep or goats. There is but one way of overcoming the obstructionists, and that is to stalk them even more carefully, so as to pass them without giving them the wind, than the deer the stalker is endeavouring to approach. Wild goats may be very fine quarry to stalk when there is nothing better, but they are a curse in a deer forest. When sheep once observe the stalker, it is all up, unless it be but an uncertain glimpse; in which case he should sink down—gradually out of their sight, and pass round again down wind, under the hill, and leave them to gaze until they are tired; they will not then back and startle every sheep for miles. One sheep has often been the means of spoiling a whole day's sport.

Now and then it is feasible to move deer which may be in the way of a stalk, by imitating a bird, or showing a stick moved slowly up and down; but this must be done quietly, and will serve to make hinds suspicious and uncomfortable, and they will often move into the corrie into which it is desired to move them, out of the way of the stalk, which is required for the stag. I have at times been able to effect the same by a low

whistle ; the latter is also sometimes useful if a stag has started to run too fast, for if the animal is unaware of the stalker's whereabouts, it will stop for a few seconds in order to ascertain whence the whistle proceeded ; a second whistle is generally fatal, as it at once betrays the locality. The first whistle should not be given until the stalker is ready to fire, and, as a rule, the stag will, on hearing it, turn slowly round and give a fair chance broadside on ; but such is only of a second's duration, and must instantly be taken advantage of. It is on such occasions as these that the value of the express rifle is evident.

The proper positions for spying are soon learned ; for a novice has but to take notice as to how his guide manages his glass and body, and he can thereby see how much or how little concealment is necessary for the occasion ; and if there is room for both the stalker and his guide to spy together, without showing themselves too near the sky-line, the former can copy the position of the latter. There are many steady positions which we make use of according to circumstances ; but the best and most comfortable is to recline against a rock, the knees being well drawn up to support the elbows, which, with the staff or walking-stick stuck in the ground and held against the glass, affords a steady rest in the strongest wind.

Having made certain that he has left nothing behind, so that no time may be lost in going back for any forgotten article, as soon as the ride is ended, the stalker should walk as slowly as if he meant never to get to the ground for which he is bound, or wherever his guide may intend to take him, and be careful to impress upon the latter individual that no power on

earth will tempt him to go a bit faster than such condition as he may be in may warrant. It is fatal to start walking too fast up a hill, and if these precautions are not observed, the chief amusement the stalker will be likely to experience will consist in surveying the country from time to time; and I would impress on him that, until after the first steep hill has been surmounted, no matter how great his thirst may be, he must not drink anything, and never do more than moisten his mouth with a little water. To give way to thirst will spoil his pleasure for the day. Likewise, if he is a smoker, he should forbear to smoke, unless at an early period of the walk, and never smoke at all during the day, save when he has reached the top of a hill, and he is spying the next corrie, and he will find a pipe then, or after his stag has been shot and gralloched, all the sweeter.

When firing up-hill at deer, a full sight must be taken, and the stalker should lie flat on his face until he is able to assume a comfortable position, and then raise himself slowly on his left elbow, get his rifle perfectly level, the hammers and sight being upright, and lay the sights full at the fore-leg of the deer, as low down as possible, and then slowly raise the muzzle of the rifle until the sight is on the shoulder of the animal. The trigger should be gradually squeezed, not jerked, or pulled, and the chances are that the bullet will strike either the neck or heart in a fatal spot. When firing down-hill, the operation of aiming must be reversed.

To spy down-hill, the stalker should lie on his back, with his head resting against some mound, tuft, or rock; the heels being quietly brought up as far as

may be necessary to afford a comfortable and sufficient support for the glass ; but if the sun is up and shining, the glass must be shut quietly when being taken down, or else the deer will catch sight of the reflection, especially if the sun is behind the user, and the fittings of the gun are not properly browned, but of bright metal.

When crawling up-hill, the head must naturally go first, but when down-hill, the feet must precede the rest of the body, the heels being next to the ground, thus offering a chance to the stalker, by slightly raising his head now and again, to obtain a full view of the deer, and to determine how best to approach them. Thus every inequality of the ground can be taken advantage of. This position is also a good one for firing, as by raising the knee and supporting the head, a nice steady rest is afforded.

If a stag is standing still, broadside on, the sight should be laid on the foreleg ; but a finer sight must be taken when shooting down-hill, according to the degree of the slope, the sight being gradually raised and covering the inside of the leg until the shoulder is reached, when a fine sight should be aligned, as it were, well inside the foreleg under the heart ; and a gradual squeeze of the trigger should send the bullet straight to the heart, if the sight is taken so that the desired spot appears to be, so to speak, just resting on the tip of it.

All express bullets 'throw up' very much, so that it is impossible to instruct a novice how to judge the distance and what sort of sight to use. He must, at first, refer to his guide ; practice alone will teach him.

When deer are travelling fast, two or three feet

must be borrowed in front, a fine sight being taken in advance of the lower part of the shoulder.

In a high wind it is very much a case of guesswork, but with a double rifle the first barrel will generally tell its own tale, and inform the stalker what to do with the second barrel, and show him whether he fired too much in front or behind, the latter being the general error.

In a gale I have had to make an allowance of yards, and at times have had to fire behind deer at a long range when wounded, and allow the wind to do the rest.

The first barrel should not be fired at a greater distance than one hundred yards if it is possible to approach nearer, for if so, it frequently happens that the poor beast is struck in the wrong place, and unless finished by a still longer shot, is left to linger in misery for, it may be, years.

I once saw a stag which had only one jaw, the lower one having been shot off several years before. How the poor animal managed to exist so long no one could make out, but the keeper could never succeed in getting a shot at it to finish it, and they declared that the hinds took care of it, and even masticated its food for it.

Sir E. Landseer avowed his belief in these statements, as he said he had often observed the hinds licking the wounds of a disabled stag, when the latter was with his harem, and one of his most celebrated pictures represents a hind which is licking the wounds of a doomed 'royal.' Long shots should, therefore, never be fired at stags unless they are wounded and require finishing.

When a stag is wounded the stalker should take care

not to show himself, unless the animal drops to shot in his tracks, when, if not hit in a vital part, it is advisable to run up at once before it can recover.

I have often heard men who were inexperienced stalkers at red-deer complain that a stag had bolted, after it had dropped with all its four legs upwards, as if it were quite dead. Nothing is much more trying than to see a beast get up and gallop off under such circumstances, just when the second barrel has been emptied at another beast in the herd. Such a misfortune happened to a friend of mine when shooting in Paat Forest in 1880. He had been stalking a lot of beasts most of the day, and eventually was handed his rifle by John Mathewson, who gave him the necessary instructions as to distance, etc. Being a fine grouse-shot, he made too sure of so large a beast as a stag at eighty yards, and in consequence took too full a sight, and aimed at no particular portion of the huge body, the result being that, as is usually the case when a stag is not properly covered, the bullet struck too high and grazed the spine, in which case a deer always drops as if it were dead, being really only paralysed for a few seconds, when it is up again and off like a shot. A similar incident occurred to the grandfather of the present Lord Lovat, who struck a stag in the same manner, and fired his second barrel at another. Those were the days of muzzle-loaders, and he was in the act of loading, while his stalker, John Ross, of Glen-Strath-Farrar, proceeded to introduce his knife into the beast through the point where the neck and shoulder meet, when, to their astonishment, up it started with the knife stuck in it, knocked John Ross over on his back, and neither knife nor stag was ever seen

again. John accounted for his bad luck by reason of his having met an old woman—a witch—that morning, or else had to go back for something he had forgotten, I forget which it was; but, at all events, he fully accounted for the occurrence.

Therefore, it is necessary that the stalker should, under such circumstances, be up to the stag at once and give him the *coup-de-grâce*. For it is certain that, if he rises again, no stalker on earth can make sure of him when going as hard as his legs can carry him over rough ground.

There is a general understanding that ‘stalkers’ law’ between forest marches consists in the right to cross the march only for the purpose of getting round a stalk on the stalker’s own march, and when the wind or nature of the ground prevent his doing so on his own property. Some lairds are more particular than others. I remember on one occasion being taxed by the late Duke of Abercorn, when at luncheon, with being acquainted with an especially particular laird in this respect, the grandfather of the present Lord Lovat, who would not allow the Duke to go over his march in order to get the wind right. It would, of course, be impossible to permit such a thing as this, as no end of mischief might be done to the adjoining forests, and the usual rule is fair enough, viz., to allow your neighbour to cross the march far enough to be able to hide his cap, when crawling on hands and knees, and then get back to his own march. In grouse-driving, I have always known the depth of one interval between the line of beaters, over and beyond the march being beaten, allowed. Some mistaken lairds have confined the allowance for deer-stalking to

this limit, and this is, of course, but rarely of any assistance, since, unless the nature of the ground admits of the stalker being concealed, it is useless, and such a restriction has doubtless been the cause of many a 'prayer' being said for such particular neighbours, when a tired man has had to give up an otherwise easy stalk on his own ground by reason of such very scant courtesy. It is, however, the best plan to endeavour to keep on good terms with such cranky old lairds.

When a deer is wounded and runs off, the stalker must remain perfectly still and watch him with the glass, and find out, where the blood is visible, whether he is fatally wounded or not. If he is badly wounded, the longer he is left the better, as he will get stiffer, and be more easily despatched. If he goes away out of sight, he should be followed at once to where he disappeared, and be as carefully searched for as if he were expected to jump up; and so, if not badly wounded, and he has been approached without his being aware of it, a second stalk may be got at him, but if he catches sight of the stalker, it is 'good-bye' to the stag. I once knew a case in which a friend of mine wounded a stag which went for six miles before a second shot was obtained by the professional, who for half a day and a night followed him up, my friend being altogether beaten out of time. This stag was first shot at when he was galloping, and travelled all this distance with a hind-leg broken. A broken hind-leg of course prevents a beast lying down or going up-hill; so it made tracks over the flat, and went as if nothing was amiss with it.

A good tracker is a necessity, and without such

assistance life becomes a burthen when following after wounded deer. The best I ever had were collies, although I have used some very good deer-hounds. The best cross of all is that of collie, retriever, and bloodhound; but a good-nosed collie of a brown colour (not black) is invaluable, and I have used such a dog successfully on the track of a wounded deer on a two days' old scent.

Donald McLeay, the keeper at Rhidoroach, had one of these old-fashioned collies, which was capable of taking up a track of a day old. The breed is now getting scarce, and is, of course, worth any money; and the only person likely to be able to supply such a dog, in case any of my readers might require one, is McLeay, who now lives at Ullapool. If a deer which is badly wounded is lost, and no tracker is available the first day, it is often impossible to find him again until he is rotten; for they hide in holes and places that would seem too small to hold even a roe-deer. The stalker should never be without a dog of his own, and never trust to luck.

When stalking, it is necessary to restrict one's self to a slow pace, as otherwise deer may not be observed, and numerous mishaps may occur if the stalker is seen by them first. Nothing pays better than careful and slow stalking, and constant spying on any forest, whether the ground be rough or easily visible with the glass.

I most strongly advise my readers never to go near to a wounded stag, but rather to give him a second barrel at all costs, even if deer are near. To give an instance of how much danger may be incurred by disregarding this caution, I may mention the case of the

stag which I shot in the Rhidoroch forest, in September, 1879, and which was galloping away from me at 200 yards range. The bullet broke his hind-leg just under the haunch, and a desperate fight occurred between the stag and the keeper. I have mentioned this occurrence in a former page. Stags, when wounded, especially if old and cunning, will, if their legs are not broken, make the most desperate rushes at a man. The wounds inflicted by their horns are apt to be very serious, as the latter are, to a certain extent, poisonous.

Nowadays, the use of deer-hounds is being abandoned, for they are apt to disturb a forest too much if a stag is slightly wounded. A good deer-hound will, however, soon bring a stag to bay, and never mistake the wounded animal. It is a grand sight to see a couple of deer-hounds pull a stag down, and a most dangerous performance for a young and untried hound. Many a fine young dog has never gone out a second time. Hind-coursing with two such dogs as Oscar and Ocean, which dogs were painted by Sir E. Landseer, is a very fine sight. The history of these deer-hounds is so well known, that I will not enlarge further regarding a sport which has gone out of fashion, chiefly because lairds are too anxious to over-stock their forests. These two hounds, Oscar and Ocean, sold at Tattersall's for nearly £100 apiece several years ago. The best deer-hounds I ever heard of were trained by the late Rev. Father Coll, at one time so well known to all our leading sportsmen. The dogs which were turned out by him but rarely made a mistake, although a great friend of his, Major C. Welman, told me that he has known

them kill a sheep when disappointed of deer-blood.

And now, as far as the present portion of this work is concerned, it but remains for me to wish my readers as good sport as I have enjoyed, and I trust that my efforts to make them good and true sportsmen may not have been unavailing. I can only say that I shall be pleased to offer any advice which they may think it worth their while to ask of me; nor should I much regret it if in so doing I may be afforded the opportunity of stretching my legs by the side of some young and keen stalker. To all I wish long life and the pleasure of securing many an 'imperial head.'

PART IV.—SALMON AND TROUT FISHING.



CHAPTER I.

The sport of fishing—How to fish—The rod—Selection of a rod—Wood for rods—Washaba—Greenheart—Composite rods—Castle Connell rods—Rod-rings—Trout rods—Special rods for special trout—Description of above specially made rod—Rod to be proportionate to strength of fisherman—Value of Castle Connell rod—Scotch lairds and heavy rods—Over-rodged—Evil of using too heavy a rod—Learning to cast—Various rods for various kinds of fishing—Fighting fish—A game sixteen-pounder—‘When the wind blows could’—A sudden show of fish—‘Two to one, bar one’—Fish indifferent to cold—Long rods when necessary—Length of salmon rods—Swinging a fish into still water—Lightly-hooked fish—Weight of rods—Spliced rods—Macdonald of Inverness—Rod-makers should be fishermen—Rod-boxes—Pliant and stiff rods—Switching—Trials of temper—Sense of sight in fish—Vision of trout—Refraction—Growth and size of trout—Colour and feeding—English and Scotch trout—Increase of numbers and decrease in size of trout—Loch Auchnanuilt—Loch Achilty—Old Inn at Strathpeffer—Reels—Mr. Malloch’s ‘sun and planet’ reel—Length of line for salmon and trout-fishing—Spinning with a fly.

MANY a well-known hunting-man has ere this taken to the sport of fishing with a zest but little inferior to that which he would display after the best of foxes over the best of countries, and no one who has ever had the good fortune to experience the intense excitement which a good fresh-run salmon can afford will be

inclined to deny the statement; and a man must be altogether deficient in the sporting instincts generally possessed by an Englishman if, at the end of twenty minutes with a twenty-pounder, he is not aware that every drop of blood in his body is tingling, and his heart beating in a manner which no ordinary cause could bring about, and especially if he is new to the sport. The playing and landing a well-conditioned, hard-fighting fish with nothing stronger than a few yards of gut is no mean triumph, believe me. If it is a work of art to steer a horse with a difficult mouth over a big country to hounds, it is infinitely more so to bring a good fish to gaff or net, whether a salmon or trout, as the case may be; and a heavy trout on fine-drawn gut can afford just as much excitement, and demand even greater skill to secure, as any salmon fresh up from the sea. Indeed, it may be honestly asserted that the amount of skill and science required to make a man a successful fisherman (I speak, of course, only of fly-fishing) is greater than that demanded for success in any other sport. I trust I may be able in the following pages to offer some practical help to the beginner, and I will endeavour to steer clear of theory as much as possible.

If my ideas on the subject do not fall in with the views of those of my brethren of the rod, I must crave their indulgence, inasmuch as, although my ways may be somewhat different to theirs, we both have the same object in view—that of catching fish—and so are, at all events, united in our intentions. However, I have found that my system of instructing a novice has met with no little success, and I have thereby been able to add many a disciple to the brotherhood.

And, first of all, it behoves the would-be angler to learn how to throw a fly, whether it be with a salmon or a trout rod.

The rod for trout-fishing must combine at least two qualifications—viz., it must be light and moderately stiff; and it is no easy matter for a person who is inexperienced in such matters to know what kind of a rod he should select, and is most suitable for his use. It is an easier matter to fit the man to the rod than the rod to the man. The first step for a beginner to take is to requisition the services of some really practical fisherman who is acquainted with the best makers, and who will give his assistance in the selection of a really good and suitable rod. Such a rod is frequently the friend of a lifetime. The first successful cast made by the fisherman is as indelibly impressed on his memory as his first run with hounds or his first stag. The more care taken in the selection of a rod the greater the satisfaction it will be likely to afford.

We fishermen are apt to be somewhat over-extravagant in the number of rods which we at times think it necessary to possess. Such, for instance, as salmon rods, switching rods for salmon-fishing, trout rods, single and double handed spinning rods, rods for trolling, rods for bait-fishing, etc.; but, all the same, there is one out of all our store which is ever the favourite, and that one is not infrequently our first. It is, as is our first gun, first horse, etc., our 'first love.' Therefore let that first rod be chosen with extra care and judgment, and be of the very best possible manufacture. The wood should be not only well seasoned, but of a description which will neither warp nor lose its shape. I have tried all kinds of wood for rods, and

have come to the conclusion that the most elastic and enduring is 'Washaba.' It is a somewhat heavy wood, but it will bear any amount of fining down, is never injured by wet or sun, and retains its shape for all time. It is by reason of the above good qualities selected by the Canadian Indians for their bows.

Greenheart when well seasoned is a good wood for rods, though heavy, but far inferior to Washaba as regards its retention of shape.

Hickory soon loses its shape, even when ever so well seasoned, its chief recommendation being its lightness.

The rods which I find the best for general handiness and wearing qualities are made thus : The butt of well-seasoned ash or, if this is not procurable, of hickory ; the centre and top joints of Washaba. Such rods I have used for years, and they have given me the greatest possible satisfaction.

The Castle Connell rods, which are made in two pieces only and are spliced, are constructed of well-seasoned greenheart. Such rods will last for a very long time—and I may, indeed, say the same of Irish rods generally.

Rod-rings, if occasionally varnished, will last for an indefinite period.

I experience very much greater difficulty in obtaining a trout rod to my satisfaction than one for salmon-fishing. I may be, perhaps, somewhat difficult to please, but I consider that it is of greater consequence that the spring, balance, and all that pertains to a good rod should be even more perfect in a trout rod than in any other description of rod, for the science requisite for success in trout-fishing, especially on some rivers, is

far greater than that for salmon-fishing. The most scientific fishing I ever experienced in Scotland completely mastered me, until I succeeded in procuring a rod which combined the exact amount of lightness and stiffness required. The trout to which I here refer were the most difficult fish to hook which I have ever known, although they were lake trout. There are in this loch no fewer than three distinct kinds of trout—viz., the ordinary yellow trout, spotted with red, the brown, and a kind which were of a bronze or almost black colour. The first two kinds were easy enough to catch, but the black ones gave me the most infinite trouble. Instead of rising at the fly, they made a rush at it, but only raised a small wave in so doing, and the instant they took it they managed to spit it out again, before there was time to strike them. Most fishermen wait until they see a fish rise or until they feel a tug, but these fish quietly sucked in the fly and as instantly rejected it. Now, however, I have succeeded in conquering them (and they are good fish, running up to 8 and 10 lb. weight) by having had a rod made specially for them, and it rarely fails to hook them. The instant the wave appears, it is necessary to turn the wrist up, and if the hook has taken hold the most desperate fight ensues, and I have been an hour before I could succeed in landing one of these fish at times. The largest salmon I ever killed, and which weighed $35\frac{1}{2}$ lb., only took some twenty minutes to bring to gaff. I think these black trout fight harder than any fish I ever knew, and every time they make a rush they jump out of the water to a height which would appear incredible; and even when exhausted and lying on their sides they will try everything they know to

get rid of the hook. A large proportion of these trout are lost, for they never rise save on the roughest days, and it is then a very difficult matter to stand steady enough to play them in a fishing-coble. I have fished for trout for the last forty odd years, but I have never experienced such sport with any other fish as I have with these black trout.

The rod which I had made for their special benefit, and with which alone I am able to cope with them, is a single-handed twelve-foot rod, with plenty of wood for some eight or nine inches above the reel. The butt and middle joint of such a rod should be of ash, unless a two-jointed spliced rod is not considered too cumbersome. Such spliced rods require to be carried in a box when travelling, as they are very apt to sustain damage when going by rail, etc., and if they are tied on boards, the rings are likely to be twisted and knocked off.

All rods should be proportionate to the height and strength of the fisherman. Nothing is more fatal to his success, and nothing looks more unsportsmanlike, than to see a man using a huge salmon-rod the size of a mast.

Many years ago, a sporting brother of mine was sent out to Halifax with his regiment, and amongst his other impedimenta he took out some three or four Castle Connell rods. On the occasion of his first appearing with one of the rods, which, by the way, was a perfect 'switching' rod, the other fishermen who were present with him, and who were using heavy rods, laughed at him, and declared that he would never kill a salmon with such a 'tooth-pick' of a thing; but before the first day was over, he had, to their astonish-

ment, not only killed more fish than anyone else, but had brought them to gaff in a very much shorter space of time than the rest of the party, who were using heavy, unwieldy rods. They all, with one accord, yielded the palm to his rod, and, furthermore, ordered some of the same pattern, and have since then used no other kind.

In Scotland it is very much the fashion for the lairds to make use of the most unnecessarily large salmon-rods, rods some 21 and even 23 feet in length—miniature trees. There is no sport in using such fearful weapons, and most certainly no comfort or pleasure. I once caused a well-known author on fishing matters no little amusement by drawing his attention to the spectacle presented by an acquaintance who was fishing with a rod of enormous proportions, remarking that it reminded me of the old-fashioned Irish threshing-flails; and he was so amused that he mentioned the circumstance in his book on angling, as descriptive of my friend's appearance. Men who insist on using over-heavy rods abuse their strength, and have to pay the penalty in old age, repenting at their leisure of their folly. A man who persists in using too heavy a gun or rod cannot succeed as well as he would if they were more suitable to his powers. When a salmon rod is so heavy that it causes its user to ache between the shoulders, it is necessary for him to give it up and take to a lighter one. Many a rod appears light enough at first, but before long its weight begins to make itself apparent. I strongly recommend a beginner to commence salmon-fishing with a light pike or peal rod, and if this is found insufficiently powerful for the size of the fish in whatever river he

may be on, then let him take to a heavier rod by degrees, and he will thus be able to exactly determine the length and weight which is most suitable for his size and strength.

The first instructions received by a beginner in salmon-fishing require to be very carefully imparted, and both pupil and teacher must be apt. I have been fortunate enough to have one of my pupils succeed in killing as his first fish one of 30 lb. weight.

It is a very easy matter to learn how to kill a salmon with the assistance of a good teacher. I myself graduated under one of the finest fishermen ever known, and, acting under his instruction, I killed the first salmon I ever hooked; and though it is many years ago, and I am now an old hand at the craft, I have never forgotten the simple rules he endeavoured to impress on my mind as a guide for me to learn and practise the art, nor can I do better than endeavour to impart them in these pages for the use of others.

To commence with, the rod should be light enough for a beginner to handle and manage with perfect ease and comfort. Having fitted a reel and line, etc., to it, let him attach a button about the weight of an ordinary salmon-fly to the end of the line, and practise casting in a field where the grass is short, commencing at first with some five or six yards of line, which latter may be gradually increased to about ten yards. The line should be cast behind him overhead, the right leg being placed in advance of the left. The line must be kept tight and straight, and not permitted to get loose or bagged, and when it has gone out to its full length, it should instantly be cast forward. The position must be firm, and the body erect, the legs

somewhat apart, as I have described, and the toes slightly turned in, the position such that it is easily possible to look back over the right shoulder at the line, and ascertain when it reaches its full extent. After a few casts have been made, the time which it is necessary to allow for the line to extend itself is soon learned, and so, by degrees, the necessary swing of the rod, whether the line be shortened or materially lengthened, will be acquired, and it must be remembered that, unless the line is allowed to go back its entire length, the forward cast will be a failure. The above plan is my own, and I have found it by far the quickest and simplest way of instructing a beginner, and after a time it becomes unnecessary to look back. In turning to see the fly behind, the body must not be moved more than can be avoided, or otherwise the rod will swing too far back over the shoulder, and it will be impossible to see the cast, which will be too far round towards the left rear. In casting, the rod must not be permitted to come too near to the shoulder in the backward motion, but be kept away from it at an angle of about 45° , so that the eye can readily discern when the line is taut behind, in order that it may be at once returned forward. The movement should not be directly a backward and forward one, but the point of the rod should rather describe a small circle or wave in the air. This will serve to prevent the line getting foul in a wind. The top of the rod only should be circled. By this plan I have many a time avoided smashing my rod when I have been standing in a place where the wind was high on the bank above me, though I myself have been completely sheltered; whereas, if the line were cast straight up

into the wind, it could never come straight back without fouling. When practising, as I have described, it is a good plan to count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 between the time the line is thrown back and returned forward. If the motion is perfectly timed, and the rod is brought forward, by means of the wrist only, to within a few inches of where the right shoulder would be if it had not been turned back so as to allow of the caster watching the line, the line will come smoothly forward without a hitch. The whole secret of casting is in the time which is allowed for the line to extend itself.

Rods must, of course, vary according to the kind of fishing for which they may be required. Rods for loch-fishing from a boat need not be more than fifteen feet in length, but twelve feet is a good length; everything, however, depends upon the strength of the butt and the middle joint. Loch fish have so much room to fight and rush about in when hooked, that they are apt, if game, and of any size, to offer very considerable resistance. It is by no means the largest fish which fight the hardest, and the best fighting salmon I have ever had to deal with have been those which were from twelve to sixteen pounders, or grilse of from eight to ten pounds. No fish give more sport than a peal or grilse on a light rod, for they plunge and leap until they are quite exhausted. About the best, certainly one of the very best runs I ever had, was with a sixteen-pounder, and it was without exception the very broadest fish for its length I ever killed. It first ran me straight up-stream for two hundred yards, and then back again to where I hooked it. This fish was one of three fish which were hooked in the same pool under somewhat peculiar circumstances. It was

a cold day in March, the wind being N.E., and so cold that the gillie, who was in a kilt, could stand it no longer, and disappeared into some bushes. I had my waders on, and while I was casting away against the wind, an incident occurred the like of which is by no means strange to fishermen, but which no one has ever yet been able to account for satisfactorily. In the space of a few seconds three fish showed themselves in different parts of the pool. I have often known fish in pools suddenly show themselves all at once, and perhaps after I have been fishing for hours without rising a thing, and have almost felt inclined to believe that there was not a fish in the river; for salmon can at times be excessively sulky, and refuse to move at any price. On the occasion referred to these three fish rose on the opposite side of the river, and I hooked the three and landed two of them; the third broke me after a desperate run. Just after this had happened the nets came down to us, and after three sweeps only succeeded in getting one fish, that one being the one I had lost, and with the fly still in its mouth.

Taking the above fish on so cold a day seems to me to be a conclusive proof that, however much river-trout may be affected by the weather, not rising when it is very cold, salmon are indifferent to such conditions. I have found that sea-trout are just as keen as salmon are in cold snow-showers, and I have many a time had the most wonderfully good sport on days when the line has been so frozen as to run through the rings with great difficulty. On one such day I once killed a hundred and twelve sea-trout.

On pools where it is not possible to make use of

a boat, it is at times necessary to make use of a somewhat longish rod. On the well-known Cruive pool in the Beaulx, I have used rods of twenty-two feet in length, but it would be the height of folly to use a longer rod than this; and, moreover, the use of such is not only calculated to cause some considerable pain to the sides and back of the fisherman, but may very probably, as I have known, cause injury to the heart, especially during the excitement produced when fish are rising and sport is good. At first the mischief is not felt and unsuspected, but in after-years all kinds of ailments are apt to make their appearance from the overstrain, to say nothing of a possibly affected heart.

I would, for a man of short stature, draw the line at a salmon-rod of seventeen feet, and if he is weakly I would reduce that length still further to sixteen feet. The latter length is quite sufficient to kill any salmon, and a greater length would only tire such an individual in less than no time, and probably produce some incurable malady. Many a man has ere this paid the penalty of carelessness in this respect, and every sportsman of experience is well aware that where brute force has to be employed there is neither pleasure, science, nor sport; added to which, a man presents a somewhat absurd spectacle in playing a salmon with a huge rod the size of the mast of a ship. And the same remark holds good when a man elects to kill trout on a salmon rod; there is absolutely no sport, for the fish are done far too speedily, and their play and fight, the very thing which so enhances the sport to a sportsman, is neutralized. A sea-trout can afford just as much sport, if an ordinary light, springy, twelve-foot rod is

used, as a salmon on the larger description of rod. Of course, much depends on the kind of water in which they are hooked, for in water which is comparatively speaking still they very soon drown themselves; whereas in rapid water their play and dash is very fine, and they afford magnificent sport in their endeavours to reach their favourite haunt behind some rock or boulder. Where too powerful a rod is used they are so easily kept headed down-stream that they soon drown by reason of the water rushing in at their gills, a plan which I have at times been forced to adopt with salmon, and which I have found succeed with the latter, both large and small, though, as every fisherman is aware, such fish have the greatest objection to going into such water, and will fight hard to avoid doing so; but once they are in they are easily managed and done for, and ten minutes will suffice to kill almost any fish under such conditions. However, the only excuse which there is for adopting such measures is to save the disturbance of the other portion of the water, for there is no sport in being forced to so curtail the bold tactics of a fresh-run, stout-hearted fish. It is not always possible to thus swing a fish down-stream into still water, for the simple reason that it will not be thus forced, having made its run up-stream and regaining its strength every moment it remains in the heavy water. I once made a bet, when fishing on the Spey, that I would land any salmon I hooked that day in, or under, five minutes, and I succeeded in killing six fish and landed each within the prescribed time.

Where there is a back-water it is simple work to kill a fish if he can be brought into it and kept there, which is feasible if the fisherman puts the proper strain on

him, the latter neither too heavy nor too light, until he has led him into the slack water, which, needless to remark, must be on his own side of the stream. In order to so land a fish the strain must never be relaxed for a second, unless a fresh rush is made, when, of course, the fish must be allowed to run, or a smash-up will most certainly follow. If a fish once succeeds in getting the better of the 'tug of war,' it will be some little time before the fisherman will again be able to obtain command of him, and he will take precious good care not to be again taken at a disadvantage, and again enticed down-stream; and none save a very skilful hand, who is thoroughly up to every dodge a fish can bring to bear, is likely to succeed in such an attempt. Nothing requires greater skill and judgment; I have known even old fishermen try it on, and make such a mess of it as not only to lose the fish, but several yards of line to boot. When a fish takes in the situation, he generally makes up-stream as hard as he can go, and until he is done it is not a wise plan to try to turn him down-stream again. When a fish does succeed in getting away from the strain put on him to head him down-stream, he generally fights hard, and shows sport which almost repays one for the risk and trouble taken.

A fish which is lightly hooked may be easily recognised by the way he behaves when he is struck with the steel. Such fish wriggle to and fro and shake their heads about, and jump out of the water at the end of every rush. The best plan to adopt is to endeavour as nearly as possible to keep the same tension on the line as when the fish was struck, for if it is ever so slightly relaxed, the chances are that the

hook will fall away from the slight hold which it has taken ; whereas, if the same steady strain is preserved, it may, as I have not infrequently known, happen that the hook may get a still better grip and get more firmly fixed in the flesh in the efforts made by the fish to get rid of it. Of course, such must depend entirely on the position of the hook. There is 'many a slip between lip and liberty' on such occasions.

When, on being struck, a fish darts away deep down into the pool, it may be generally assumed that he is well hooked, and if he makes a dash straight up or down stream on a taut line, so much the better for his captor ; but when a fish comes up to the top of the water on being struck, the reverse is the case, and not only is it probable that he will get away, but in any case it will take very skilful handling to bring him to gaff.

I fix the length of an average salmon-rod at $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and if made of greenheart, the weight at about 2 lb. 6 oz. Of course the latter must depend on the description of wood which is used in the manufacture. Ash and hickory, being light woods, make the best butts, that is to say, if a light rod is desired. I have in my possession a 17 foot salmon-rod, one joint spliced, which weighs only 1 lb. 13 oz., made for loch-fishing by a boatman in West Meath, and for use on a still day, or for switching, it is one of the best rods I ever killed a salmon on. I last year killed a fish on it, for a bet, in five minutes. A light rod on a still, calm day will do its work even better than a heavy rod, and afford ever so much more sport.

As a rule, spliced rods are slightly heavier than ferruled. I possess several three-jointed rods of green-

heart, of 18, 19, and 21 feet in length, but unless a river happens to be a very wide one I seldom use them, by reason of the labour they entail.

Although they give more trouble to take down and put together, I infinitely prefer to use rods which are spliced. A well-known rod-maker, Macdonald by name, of Inverness, once remarked, in my hearing, to a gentleman who was ordering a ferruled rod, in preference to a spliced one, inasmuch as, he said, the spliced ones were such a bother to tie: 'The man who is too lazy to tie his rod is not fit to fish, and I'll make no rod for him,' and the gentleman was forced to abandon his order and leave the shop. Macdonald was, for something over forty years, boatman to the late Mr. Baillie, of Dafour, and was one of the very best of rod-makers, and I am inclined to think that he was quite right in what he said. In my opinion, there is nothing like a spliced rod—such a rod as one in which you 'may introduce the top to the butt' without fear of so much as a crack. These are the rods to do the work, and will double up a fish in no time; there is no uneven stiffness, or catchy spring in the wrong place; everything goes as smoothly as the water they cover.

It is, where possible, the best plan to purchase one's rods from a maker who has himself been, or is, a good all-round fisherman. With such a man to deal with, one's wants are readily understood and carried out.

A rod-box, capable of taking some half-dozen rods, is most useful. Different rivers require different rods, and where, on one river, it is a necessity to use a pliant rod, on another the reverse is the case, and the services of a stiff rod have to be requisitioned; but

when I make use of the term 'stiff,' I do not mean a heavy, unyielding lump of wood, but a rod in which there is ample substance in the butt and middle joints ; sufficient, but no more, to prevent the line going too far back and the hook catching in grass, trees, etc., etc. ; in fact, to make my meaning more clear, a rod which is strong enough to sustain the weight of the line when thrown backwards without unduly bending and allowing the cast to drag on the ground and catch in any obstructions—a rod with plenty of 'backbone' in it.

The switch, or, as it is termed, the 'spey' cast is easily acquired with the aid of a running stream free from backwater. It is made thus : An ordinary cast having been made, the stream is allowed to carry the line taut to its full extent ; the point of the rod is then gradually and quietly raised, without any check or catch in the motion, until the fly is brought up to within some four or five yards of the point where the fisherman is standing. At this time the rod will be as upright and as far back over the shoulder as can, under the circumstances, be managed ; it must be grasped tightly with both hands, and, pointing the top in the direction required for the new cast, be brought sharply and forcibly down to within a foot or two of the water, by which motion the fly and line are drawn off the water, and come over in a circle again, falling on the water at their full extent, and in the direction the top of the rod was pointed. During the process of drawing the fly towards him, the fisherman must remember to, as it were, 'keep touch' with the fly. If the cast is a long one, the line may be drawn rather across the body towards the shoulder and further away

from the river, viz., if the river is flowing from left to right, the motion would be towards the left shoulder, if from right to left, towards the right. In repeating the cast, the draw-back must be made before the fly has swung round to the bank on the side the caster is standing, so as to ensure there being sufficient strength of stream to keep the line perfectly tight. The success of this cast is very nearly entirely dependent upon the observation of this rule, for unless the line is taut, not only is it impossible to make the cast neatly, but it is quite possible to smash the very strongest salmon-rod in the performance.

The advantages of the above cast are many and obvious : chiefly, that the line never going behind the rod, it is most useful in enabling the fisherman to try his skill in places which would otherwise be well-nigh unfishable ; as, for instance, where high rocks, trees, etc., are immediately behind him ; I may also add that it is equally useful when the wind is blowing strongly down-stream.

In making the above cast too much force must not be used, nor must a beginner lose his temper from the many little causes which may arise to test it, such as adverse wind, trees, rocks, stones, dead or back water, etc. Fish are not always to be found, or if found, to be captured, just when we should wish, and temper is one of the fisherman's greatest trials, and if he cannot keep his temper he is bound to come to grief, and the most patient man is ever the luckiest fisherman. Everything goes wrong with an impatient, hasty man, and everything goes right with the one who takes matters easily and preserves his temper. Let the man who is tempted to get in a rage when fishing—and

who is not at times?—remember that if he has got himself into a mess, it is nearly always through his own ignorance, or want of care, and that the sooner he sets to work to put matters straight, the sooner he will be ready to start again under fresh auspices.

It is well for a fisherman to remember that sight is the sense which fish, salmon and trout especially, possess in the most marked degree. In the English brooks the latter, owing to the clearness of the water, are most difficult to approach. Salmon and sea-trout doubtless afford very fine sport, but it demands infinitely greater skill and science to put a fly properly in the exact spot needful to lure a wily brown trout; and before the cast can be made it is often necessary to crawl on all fours in order to get near enough to make it, and where there is no bush or other cover behind which to conceal one's self, it is even then very probable that, owing to refraction, the fish will see one.

It is well, for this kind of work, to have one's knickerbockers covered with leather at the knees, in order that where it is necessary to crawl or kneel the discomfort of wet knees may be avoided, and it also serves as a protection against rough stones, etc.

That the vision of trout is marvellously acute must be very obvious to anyone who has noticed them rising at insects which are hardly visible to our eyes, and this they will do even though the daylight may long since have faded, and at intervals during many a night. If this is the case, as it most undoubtedly is, it is evident that the shadow of a man, and also of his rod, must be at times very readily apparent to fish in the daytime. Refraction, too, plays strange freaks at

times, of which we are not always aware, for under certain conditions it is very certain that a shadow is more clearly thrown on the water when standing some distance away from the latter, than when at its very brink ; and many a man who is not cognizant of this, or who is too careless to remember it, will, because he is some distance from the river, fish away, standing the while upright, being under the impression that the fish cannot see him ; while all the time he, and every button on his coat, is as plainly visible to them as if he were standing in front of a mirror. He wonders why he catches no fish ! any friend from the opposite bank could very readily inform him. The experiment can very easily be tried by putting a mirror flat on the ground, and then, placing some object of the height of a man some distance away from it, noticing from how far off the reflection of the object will be cast in it. The result is somewhat startling to anyone who is unacquainted with the laws of refraction. Yet the mirror but represents the surface of the water.

The growth and size of trout are entirely dependent upon the description and quantity of food they can obtain. I have killed lake-trout which very far exceeded in weight any river-trout, and this may be attributed to the enormous quantity of flies which are hatched in such waters. The rivers being narrow, a very great amount of the flies which are hatched save their lives by being able to reach the rushes and grass which grow on the banks, and so are lost to the fish as food ; moreover, the quantity of flies bred in rivers is infinitely less by comparison than those which are bred in lakes.

It is asserted that where trout in the same lake

or river differ in colour, as is frequently the case, such variation is due to a difference in food. As a rule, it is quite true that the redder the flesh of trout, the better condition they are in; but, at the same time, I have caught many a fat and well-conditioned trout whose flesh has been quite white, and I do not therefore attach any value to the theory, and have come to the conclusion that feeding has nothing whatever to do with any material variation in the colour of the skin or flesh. Some slow-running English rivers and canals produce trout just as good as the Scotch lake-trout, and it is the fault of the Conservators of a district if the rivers are capable of holding good fish and fail to do so.

No river-trout in Scotland can for a moment compare with those of the English rivers. The nature of the bottoms of the rivers is totally different. Where, however, the Scotch rivers are slow-running, such as the Eden, Leven, Leet, Blackadder, and parts of the Spey, the trout are good, and some good fish of three, four, and even five pounds are obtainable in the slow, deep pools on the upper portions of the Beaully. I have heard of trout of six and seven pounds, and, unless I am mistaken, one of twelve pounds, being taken on the Tweed, but in no case were they equal in quality to our smaller trout.

Age may influence the weight of trout, but it certainly does not affect their colour, and this I have more than once heard asserted as a fact.

Where the number of trout in a lake is excessive, the fish will be small, and continually decrease in size. In proof of which the following may be of some interest. Loch Auchnanuilt, near to the railway-station of that

name on the Dingwall and Skye Line, adjoins Loch Culen. Although these two lochs unite, the fish were unable to pass from the latter into the former by reason of a fall. Some years ago this fall was blown up, and the fish were able to get into Loch Auchnanuilt, in which loch no pike had previously existed, though present in great numbers in Loch Culen, the result being that in the former loch, although the trout have very considerably decreased in numbers, they have proportionately increased in size. The pike, having done their work, are now being thinned out. It may therefore be concluded that the fewer the fish the larger they become, owing to the increased quantity of food. Trout in this loch run up to 16 lb., and there are several enormous pike in it. The loch is easily reached, but no one but a skilful fisherman can expect to get sport with the largest trout. They are the fish to which I have previously referred as being so very difficult to hook. The smaller-sized yellow trout are easily caught if the proper flies are used.

On Loch Achilty, another beautiful loch of some ten miles in circumference, near to Strathpeffer, there is an island which is somewhat interesting, for I discovered the ruins of a house and garden on it. Char-fishing is, however, the chief sport to be got there, and I much wonder why some good trout from Loch Auchnanuilt have not been transported thither for stock. The inn at Achilty is comfortable, and is about four miles from Strathpeffer. The latter place is, however, a good headquarters for the fisherman, as it is within reach of several good lakes. The old inn at Strathpeffer has been enlarged, and I can recommend it as being most comfortable and well-managed by that best of all

Highland managers, Mr. Munroe, whose courtesy is well known. The visitor there can enjoy the triple charms of sport, spa-waters, and music. I may also add that, to those to whom such an item is a consideration, the charges are moderate.

Reels are a very important consideration. I have tried ever so many different kinds, including that invented by Sir Joseph Hawley, and have come to the conclusion that by far the best pattern is Malloch's 'sun and planet' reel for trout and salmon, and also the spinning or trolling reel by the same inventor, from which latter as many as seventy yards of line can be cast straight from the reel, without the necessity of having to draw out any line with the hand. It is one of the very best and most useful of angling inventions, and a great comfort to the fisherman. Mr. Malloch is not only a practical man, but he is the best fisherman in Perthshire, and is well known as a frequent prize-winner. Though I have used his inventions for so long, I have, I regret to say, never met him.

I advise no fisherman to have less than 150 yards of line on his salmon-reel, or less than 100 yards for trout-fishing, inasmuch as, when trolling for trout in lakes, it occasionally happens that there may be as much as 60 yards of line out at a time.

There is a very killing way of fishing for trout by trolling with a fly of which I am cognisant. If any of my readers desire to know more about it, I shall be very pleased to inform them; but although such a system is perfectly legal, I do not think I should be justified in making it too generally known, inasmuch as the abuse of it might cause harm, spoil the sport of

many who deserve sport, and afford sport to those who do not. It is certainly the most killing dodge on lakes, very broad, deep river-pools, or at the mouths of rivers when the tide begins to flow. I may say that I believe it to be as murderous as any cross-line fishing.

CHAPTER II.

Science required for trout-fishing—Daping—Striking a fish—Striking from the reel—Fish quickly hooked insensible to pain—Foul-hooked—Lost and found—Sport of fly-fishing—Too early fishing—Greediness of trout—Fishing in weedy rivers—Trout gut, and where to get it—Use of two flies—Size of flies—Tackle for brook-fishing—Troubles of a beginner—Too heavy a line—Home-made flies—Bad hooks—A distressful day—Care necessary as regards perfection of tackle—Drying lines after fishing—Losing a reel—A frayed line—A lucky catch—A cut finger—A caught fish—‘If you want a thing done’—The ‘Mare’s Pool’—A warrantable deer—Raining trout—Good and bad flies—An Irishman’s reason—Salmon flies—The May fly—Trout flies—Natural *v.* artificial—The late Francis Francis—Wet and dry fly-fishing—Shotting a cast—Plenty of line necessary—An anecdote—Floating reels—Anecdote of the late Mr. John Bright—The Groam Pool—Anecdote of Mr. John Bright continued—The inventor and his waders—Flood water and a ‘silver doctor’—Deterioration of sport in fishing—Brass minnows—Baiting a pool—Eels in the Beaulieu—Migration of Eels—Eels as food—Lord Lovat’s net, or ‘caught with a cobweb.’

It is easy enough to learn to catch and kill a salmon, but trout-fishing demands a skill and science all its own, and both skill and patience are sorely tested. Many a time I have led myself to believe that I was going to succeed in capturing some well-known monster trout. I am free to confess that, although I have often succeeded in rising and even hooking such local characters, I have but rarely ever killed one with an artificial fly. The skill required to catch the ordinary brook-trout is by no means inconsiderable, but it takes

a man nearly a life-time before he can learn to cope with these knowing old warriors.

I have killed more fish when daping with a natural fly than by any other method ; but in order to do this it is necessary to observe the greatest caution and care, even to the colour of one's clothes, and the fisherman must take advantage of every bush, or other cover which will help to conceal him, and, if possible, to watch the larger fish in the pool so as to keep the fly away from the reach of the smaller fry. I have had a very great deal of sport in this way, and I must say that I consider it just as scientific and satisfactory work as fishing with an artificial fly. When one of these big trout rush at the tempting morsel, he at once swallows it and gets well hooked, and if the tackle is not of the very best description (and it must be both fine and strong for this kind of work) there is little chance of killing him, for such fish will give twice as much trouble as any 20 lb. salmon.

There are many ways of striking a fish—*i.e.*, hooking it—but the proper way is to turn the wrist up sharply, *without raising the hand*. To describe the action more plainly, the palm of the hand, being downwards before the fish rises, should be turned quickly upwards. This simple turn of the wrist will hook any trout when he has taken the fly, but any other way of jerking the fly up is uncertain, and often causes a disastrous result when the fish is a good one.

In fishing pools, or any water other than still, the line should never be pressed tightly between the hand and the rod. It is quite sufficient for the first finger to maintain a light pressure, but the remaining fingers must not press more on the line than is sufficient to

keep it taut, and when casting or striking, the first finger must not grasp the rod. It is by far the best plan, when striking a fish or where the stream is rapid, to keep the hand altogether clear of the line and leave the stream to keep it taut, there will then be no fear of striking too hard, nothing can break, and the line can run as freely as necessary. A fish so 'struck from the reel,' as it is termed, generally affords more sport by reason of its being struck harder.

I have frequently proved that fish which have been quietly and gently hooked do not feel pain, for in numberless instances where such has been the case and the hook has broken, the fish have been taken again soon afterwards with the hook still sticking in them.

The skin of a fish is very tough, and will hold like leather, without giving any pain to the fish, which suffers more from fright than pain. Fish hooked in the skin do not fight as hard as if hooked in the eye, mouth, or on any bone. I have, when fishing with large hooks, hooked salmon through the eye, and they have fought as if they were mad, their very weight and struggles helping the fisherman to exhaust and kill them all the sooner.

I once hooked a salmon when using a shrimp as a bait; and when I was playing it, in a rocky and dangerous pool, it ran up-stream under a sharp rock. I could not see far down into the pool, and the result was that he broke me, and I not only lost the gut cast, but also several yards of line, which was frayed against the rock, and I of course also lost my shrimp tackle, which consisted of the usual lead and spinner, all of which I recovered, some four days later, stuck close into the shoulder of the fish, having captured the latter

when fishing in a pool lower down the river with a large peacock fly. I could quote numberless instances of fish being recaptured with flies and casts in them, but I never heard of a fish being retaken with a heavy piece of lead on the tackle.

The above event occurred on the river Beauly, about eleven years ago, much to the surprise of the gillie, himself an experienced fisherman, and is so uncommon, that I think it as well to mention that the fish was first hooked and lost in the pool above the mill-pond in the Beauly, and was eventually taken in the mill-pond below it, on the well-known stretch of water known as the 'Falls of Kilmorach.' The gillie who was with me was Hugh Fraser, of the Cruives, Beaufort Castle.

Fishing with a fly is so much more sporting than bait fishing, that it behoves me to give my first attention to it.

There are many rivers which are open for fishing in February, but nothing much can be done with a fly before March, for the reason that there is no fly up, and therefore the fish are not looking out for flies, but for the more substantial food at the bottom, where they obtain food as well as in the middle or on the surface of the water. Trout are not particular as regards their food, for I have known them swallow young sparrows and mice, and many a thing which falls accidentally into the water; they also eat not only the spawn of other fish, such as salmon, etc., but their own.

In weedy rivers it is impossible to land trout by gentle means, or with a weak rod, for it is often necessary to pull the fish clean over the weeds, and this necessitates the use of a stiff rod. Indeed, in some

rivers which are over-weedy, a two-handed rod is more useful, in order to swing the fish over the weeds ; by which term I do not mean to imply that the fish is to be swung out of the water, but to be turned down-stream in order to drown it, and then gently dragged over the weeds until safe in deep water, by which time it is quite possible that it may recover itself sufficiently to show some considerable fight. The tactics to be employed in drowning heavy trout are similar to those which I have described for the drowning of salmon.

The best gut for trout fishing is what is termed 'fine-drawn,' which being of various thicknesses, allows of the cast being gradually tapered off towards its tail-end. The best tapered gut I ever obtained was from Mr. Kelly, of Sackville Street, Dublin, and the best salmon gut from Mr. George Little, 63, Haymarket. This gut would almost pull a salmon out of the water, very much like the Irishman, Nicholas Browne's description of the gut he sold in Galway: 'Yer honor, it would pull a dead harrse out of a bog.'

Where two flies are used, whether for salmon or trout, the tail fly should always be larger than the 'bob' fly, or else the casting cannot be done neatly and effectively, since the heavier fly naturally falls first on the water, and must double over the lighter one. I have seen fish lost by a knot being thus formed in the gut cast.

The proportionate size of the flies to each other is not the only thing which has to be considered, for the line must be suitable to the rod. The stiffer the rod the heavier the line must be, and *vice versa*; nor can too great attention be paid to this particular, if scientific work is necessary in order to catch fish. But whatever

kind of tackle may be used, whether it be fine or coarse, the casting must be performed by the wrist, so as not to allow the casting-line to go too far to the rear.

In brook-fishing, some thirty odd yards of line is sufficient, and the rod must be of such a build as to cast such a fine description of line cleanly and neatly, for nothing is more annoying than for the gut to crack off and form knots by reason of a rod being too whippy. Every beginner, however, is sure to lose any number of flies, and in his endeavours to keep the line taut behind him he is very apt to overdo it and so catch in the grass; or else, if the return is made too hurriedly, a loud crack is the consequence, and if the fly is not whipped off, the gut is probably half broken through, and on hooking a fish afterwards, no matter how small it may be, the latter walks off with the flies and half of the cast, much to his (the caster's) astonishment.

If the line is too weighty for the rod, the attempt to cast lightly will and must result in a splash, thereby scaring every fish in the pool, added to which the rod will most certainly be strained and twisted, and not improbably broken, thereby affording the user the pleasure of having to sit down and mend it as best he may, or go home; nor does the mischief end here, for a mended rod is never quite the same as before. If the line is too heavy for the powers of a rod, the latter must, in any case, wear out in no time instead of lasting for a lifetime. If a line when cast backwards feels heavy, it may at once be assumed that it is more than the powers of the rod are equal to. One can hardly be too particular in these little matters which

refer to trout-fishing, which latter sport, from its very difficulty, demands that everything should be as perfect as possible.

If a fisherman is able to tie his own flies, he will experience a twofold satisfaction and increased success. Bought flies are frequently very unreliable and come to pieces, and another constant cause of fish being lost; but I can truthfully assert that I never found one of my own come to pieces or break through any fault in the tying save once, and that was my first attempt, and I had omitted to lap the waxed thread round the hook before I fastened on the gut.

Of course, there are many fishing-tackle makers whose flies may be thoroughly relied on, but there are other establishments where such quantities of flies are made and sold that boys are employed to tie them, and the result is that the hooks draw away from the gut.

Bad hooks, too, are another cause of trouble to the fisherman, and break off in the fish, especially if they happen to strike against a bone.

As an example of how one may be 'done' in this respect, I some years ago entertained a large fishing and shooting party, and as I had to look after my guests I had no time for fly-tying. One or two heavy fish (one a 30-pounder) had been hooked on a Suir fly called the 'Brown Dog,' and it wore out. Not having time to tie another, I sent the fly to a first-class tyer as a pattern and ordered half-a-dozen to be tied for me. I am never likely to forget the result. The first fish I hooked was a 30-pounder in the Cruives, at Beaufort Castle, on the Beaully, which I lost when played out, as I was alone on a high bank, the gillie having gone

on a message and taken the gaff with him. I could not 'tail' the fish, as it was in deep water. In the next pool I hooked a 24-pounder and killed it. Then another heavy fish in the same pool at the tail of Charlie; another fish, evidently a heavy one, ran me down to Groam Pool, where, after a ten minutes' struggle, the hook broke. I then hooked another large fish at the tail of Groam, the hook also breaking in the same manner. I then thought that it was about time to stop using these flies, and did so, but never a fish could I rise with anything else for two days, until I had time to tie up some flies of the same pattern for myself. One can hardly be too careful in any particular as regards one's fishing gear, in order to avoid the chance of an accident, and I always feel twice the confidence when fishing with tackle which I have made myself; and with such confidence one can do better than when uncertain what amount of strain the tackle will sustain.

After a day's fishing the line should always be unwound off the reel and hung up to dry. I have often known cases where good fish, and yards of line to boot, have been lost through the line having been left wet on the reel for some time and so become rotten.

On one occasion, when salmon-fishing from a boat, in hooking a fish I gave the rod a jerk, and away went my reel into the river, owing to the careless way in which it had been fastened on by the gillie. Boatmen are very apt to be careless in such matters, and it is ever the better plan to see to all such things for one's self, and to trust no one else to do them.

During the same week another mishap occurred through the carelessness of the same gillie. He had

been told that some of the line had become frayed when playing a fish, owing to one of the rings at the top of the rod having got out of gear. To my horror, when playing a salmon soon after, I saw this frayed portion running out through the top ring, being held together by only a few threads. It was a dilemma, and I did not know what to do ; but on the chance of the fish being well hooked, I lowered the point of my rod, when it gave up pulling and fortunately took to sulking, thereby affording me the opportunity to reel up the line. I had no sooner got the frayed portion almost to the reel when it snapped, and I caught it with my left hand, and had only just time to tie it round my forefinger when away went the fish. I was in waders and in deep water, and I found it such exhausting work running after the fish, that it was about six to four on my giving in first ; but it turned out otherwise, for I managed to kill the fish, a 17-pounder, under peculiarly trying circumstances, the line being half-way up my rod and the fish some thirty yards off. Mr. Allen Fraser, of the Cruives, witnessed the performance, and he delights in describing the struggle, and his own doubts at the time as to whether man or fish would prove the winner. I should be very sorry to repeat the performance, for the pain caused by the line cutting my finger nearly induced me to give in, and I had to run after the fish until I was quite blown ; but fortunately the fish stopped and sulked for a minute or two in a deep pool, which gave me time to recover a bit, and after playing it and drowning it in the deep water, I succeeded in bringing it to gaff. I shall not forget the exclamations of mingled Gaelic and English which greeted me, nor my

expressions in reply. 'Why . . . did you not cut off thirty *yards* of line, and *not feet*? The frayed part was thirty *yards* up the line, not ten.'

The above but serves to prove what I said regarding the necessity there is for a fisherman to see to everything himself, and never to trust to the carrying out of a verbal order. Instead of cutting off the line above the frayed portion, the stupid idiot had but cut off a few feet, which, by reason of the dressing having worn away, appeared white, and thus given me about as bad a time of it, in order to save a well-hooked fish and my fly and cast, as any man need wish for. The cast alone cost me 12s. 6d., for it was very difficult to procure such gut then, and absolutely impossible nowadays.

Another curious coincidence occurred a few days afterwards, when I was fishing on the neck of a celebrated pool, called the 'Mare's Pool,' on the same river. It is a difficult pool to get down to from any point, but especially so at the neck, the rocks being several score of feet above, and when these have been successfully descended there is just room to stand properly on one foot, and but small purchase for the other, and that only when standing sideways, and when fishing it is impossible to stand in any other way without risk of falling into the well-nigh unfathomable depth of water below. The pool is full of grilse and salmon during most of the summer months, and is well worth the difficult climb to reach it. I have hooked as many as thirty grilse in a day in this pool and two others below it in the month of June. On the day in question it was full of fish, and as the water was rather low it had to be fished carefully. While fishing the neck of the pool standing sideways, something in the river

attracted the sight of my left eye, and appeared to be of a different colour to the white foam which was washed down from the red fall above me. On turning my head to see what it was, I was much surprised to observe a fine stag doing its utmost to escape from me and my rod. The neck of the pool is only nine feet across, so that the stag, when exhausted by trying the fall, fell back to my feet in order to get a rest in the slacker water. Wishing to prevent its being frightened into the pool lower down and so spoiling the water, I kept on touching it with the point of my rod. The poor beast got so exhausted at last in its endeavours to swim the fall, that I allowed it to come to my feet, and the gillie, Hugh Fraser, managed, by dint of throwing stones, to turn it up on to the only ledge of rock in the pool to which it could manage to swim and get on, and there it remained the whole day, staring at us while fishing and having our luncheon. No doubt when we left the pool it swam quietly down the river and got out into the Ruttle, or some other of the celebrated Beaufort coverts.

A curious piece of luck once happened to me. One very bright day in the same month I had walked some four miles to fish, and sat down to rest under the shade of a hazel-bush, and began to think it useless trying to fish on such a bright day and with the water so low as it was. However, I lazily proceeded to put my rod together, still keeping under the bush. I had just fixed the joints, and was raising the rod to see if everything was all right before I put on the reel, when flop at my feet fell a magnificent trout of 3 lb., which I quickly appropriated. On looking up to see what was the cause of such luck, it proved to be that an osprey,

which had caught the fish, was flying low down, the weight being too heavy for it, and when I raised my rod suddenly from behind the bush it was so frightened that it dropped its prey.

Thus four curious incidents occurred to me in a very short period :

Firstly, my reel falling out of the boat in the Cruives Pool, the deepest in the Beaulieu.

Secondly, the line breaking while I was playing a salmon, and my catching the line, and afterwards killing the fish with it on my hand.

Thirdly, the stag on the rock, whose life was saved by keeping it there all day while I was fishing.

Fourthly, the trout dropped at my feet on a bright June day by the osprey, the last named being truly lucky, for it was Friday, and the weather and water all against the chance of even rising a fish.

Although in many good fishing districts it is quite possible to purchase flies, they are often but indifferently constructed, and I would therefore advise any of my readers who may contemplate making a fishing trip to be careful to obtain a good supply of the standard flies from some good maker. Of course, there are some local men whom no maker can excel in work, whether in London or elsewhere, but such cases are few and far between.

I remember once asking a professional fly-tyer and fisherman why he tied his hackles on so badly. Being an Irishman, he was not at a loss for a ready reply. 'Sure, yer honour, if a fly kills one fish, it ought to do ; there would be no trade at all if it killed two fish.' If the honesty of the speaker was doubtful, he without doubt expressed himself honestly, and although his

flies were of a very killing order I declined to purchase any ; but I tied some flies for myself from his patterns, and found them more killing than any others I possessed, even out of a large collection.

The following list comprises the best-known salmon flies, viz.: Jock Scott** (and also the Blue Jock Scott) ; Silver Doctor ;** Butcher ;** Childers ;** Peacock, or Snow-fly ;** Devil ; Wasp Grub ;** Thunder and Lightning ;** Durham Ranger ;** Sun-fly, or Dunkeld ; Lord Chief Justice, or Lawyer ; Corballis, or Tay Sun-fly (sold by R. Lees, Perth) ; Champion ;* Britannia ;* Infallible ;* Harlequin ; Dawson ;* Benchill ;* Fairy King ; Fairy Queen ; Black Dose ;** Colonel ; Brown Dog ;** Popham ;** Namsen ; Claret, or Spey-fly ;* Guinea-hen ; Parson ;** Baker ; Candlestick-maker ; Blue Ranger ;** The Major ; Black Ranger ;** Doctor ;** Black and Teal ; Goldfinch.**

The following are equally suitable for Scotland, Norway, Canada, etc. : The Dun Wing ;* the Drake Wing ; the Teal Wing ;* the White Wing ; the White Tip ; the Toppy ;* the Kate ; the Blue Doctor ;** the Black and Yellow ; the Golden Mallard. All these kill well on the Tweed, Beaul, Tay, etc.

The Dhoon-fly (or Mahseer-fly),* used by a friend of mine in the Himalayas, also does well on the Don and Thurso ; the Duke of Sutherland ;* the Sir Francis Sykes ; the Priest ; the Switching Sandy ;** the Black Dog ;** the Tartan ; the Nicholson ;* the Murray ; the Wasp ;** the Claret Wasp ;* the Policeman ; the Waterwitch ; the Lion ;* the Spey Dog ;* the Caroline ; the Purple King ; the Spey ;* the Green King ; the Shannon ;** the Owenmore ; the

Yellow Anthony (on the river Lee, county Cork);** the Suir;* the Judge; the McGildowny; the Erly; the Powell's Fancy; the Grace; the Garibaldi; the Golden Olive; the Blue Jay;* the Green Grouse;** the Llanover; the Welshman's Fairy; the Captain; the Gamekeeper; the Chimney Sweep.

The above list of various flies is a long one, but if I were to give the names of all the different patterns which are constantly being invented they would well-nigh fill a book. I have left out some few of the standard flies which I consider to be overrated, and given only those which I know to be good killers, when tied in the sizes suitable to the different rivers and their varying conditions of water.

A man possessing the above collection may fish anywhere, either at home or abroad. Of course, I do not mean to infer that it is necessary for any man to possess all of the flies in the above list, but a wise selection made from it will suffice for any salmon-fishing anywhere. I have marked with a single asterisk those which are notoriously the best, and the older standard patterns with a double one.

As we are now in the month of June and the May-fly is rising in many of the English rivers and on the Irish lakes, I will commence the list of trout-flies with the Green Drake. It is a fly most difficult to imitate well, as also its change, the Gray Drake. The natural flies are easily caught, and I have had some good sport with fish daping with them; but I have not often used the artificial May-fly, save at times those made by Mr. Ogden, of Cheltenham. I think that perhaps his and Hammond's (of Winchester) Champion are the best patterns. My list is as

follows : May-fly (Green Drake) ; Gray Drake (or Spent-Gnat) ; March Brown (on some rivers only—generally the female) ; Blue-Dun, Hare's Ear (an excellent fly) ; Little Blue Dun (good on every river, and indispensable) ; Yellow Dun ; Evening Dun ; Olive Dun (the best of all flies) ; Red Spinner (large) ; Red Spinner (small) ; Claret Spinner ; Brown Spinner (the spinners are indispensable) ; August Dun (very similar to a March Brown, and very good) ; Stone-fly (local). This last-named fly (often miscalled the May-fly) is found on some rivers (those principally in the north), and they attain to considerable size on the Beaulieu, and there is also on that river a very large spider, which is to be found amongst the stones on the banks of the celebrated Groam Pool (I have imitated these spiders with the following dressing, viz., body of fur from a cat's tail, and wing of gray turkey. When wet, these imitations closely resemble the natural insect, and are very killing). The February Red ; the Willow-fly (invaluable in some streams) ; the Sand-fly ; the Alder-fly (invaluable in some streams) ; the Gravel-fly ; the Hawthorn-fly (invaluable in some streams) ; the Cinnamon-fly ; the Fern-fly ; the Soldier-fly ; the Wren Tail-fly ; the Partridge Wing fly ; the Silver Horns and Brown Silver Horns ; the Landrail ; the Coch-y-Bonddhu (excellent everywhere) ; the Iron-blue (absolutely necessary when that fly is on the water, and taken by the fish to the exclusion of all other flies) ; Sedge-fly (for evening), Small Sedge-fly (both good nearly everywhere) ; Wickham's Fancy (a standard pattern) ; Red Quill Gnat (a standard pattern) ; Red Tag (excellent at times, especially with fish which feed under water rather than on the surface ; a fancy

fly). (The editor has here added to the author's list, and remarked on those flies which he has proved to be the best.)

The virtues of the Red Spinner for late evening fishing can hardly be over-estimated, and with the addition of a few duns, spinners, midges, sand, sedge and cinnamon flies, the angler can fish anywhere where trout are to be found.

Needless to remark, the nearer the artificial fly approaches in imitation to the natural, the greater the success that will be obtained. The late Francis Francis, who, by the way, has written the best book on angling ever produced, avowed his belief in using only black, brown, red, and blue flies, together with the Hare's Ear, as being of greater service than all the colours of the rainbow.

There are two different styles of fishing for trout, viz., with a 'wet' and a 'dry' fly. No hard-and-fast rule can possibly be laid down for the adoption of either method, and circumstances must control the angler as to which of the two styles must be used.

In clear, still streams a dry fly will do a very great deal, and is often the only way of killing fish; but where the water is rough and rapid, such a system cannot be used, and the 'wet' sunk fly must be adopted, and is frequently the best way to kill fish in either water when the weather is rough. When a stream is very rapid, it is at times necessary to fix a shot or two on the casting-line, in order to somewhat delay the passage of the fly, and afford the fish time to see and seize it.

I once, when salmon-fishing in the Cruives Pool, on the Beaulieu, adopted this plan of shotting my cast, and

had excellent sport on a day when no one else could take a fish. This was some three-and-twenty years ago ; and I advised several of my friends to adopt the same method when fishing in heavy water, and the result was that I had several accounts of big autumn fish being taken and affording superexcellent sport, running out scores of yards of line under water. I may say that where a river is wide, and there is no means of getting a salmon in a boat, I do not think 200 yards of line by any means an unnecessary length, as the following anecdote will go to prove.

A friend of mine, when fishing on the Spey, after hooking and landing a 30-pounder, sat down to have his luncheon, and then proceeded to fish the same spot in hopes of getting its mate. The gillie, thinking that it was not likely he would get a second fish in the same place, lay down and went to sleep ; however, my friend did succeed in hooking another large fish, from his account an even heavier one than the first. Despite the fact that a lost fish is always an extra big one, the fish ran him out 150 yards of line clean off the reel, when it snapped off. It was in vain that he shouted and yelled for the gillie to fetch the boat, which was some distance farther up-stream ; the latter was too sound asleep. It was impossible to follow the fish, for the water was too deep, and the nature of the ground forbade it, and so the fish, which was evidently not under 30 lb. in weight, went off with everything.

Now, had my friend been fishing with a floating reel, the case might have been different. Such reels are often used ; and when a fish runs off in this fashion, and there is no help for it, by studying the stream and throwing rod and all in, it is possible to regain

possession of it by sending the gillie to a point where he can turn the fish by stoning it, for it will on such occasions generally return to the spot where it was hooked, and the gillie can seize the rod when it passes him, and follow the fish till the angler can get round or over the difficulties offered by the bank, etc.

The late Mr. John Bright, when receiving his first lesson in salmon-fishing from the grandfather of the present Lord Lovat, on the Groam Pool, on the Beauly, had a very narrow escape of being drowned.

As I have said, Lord Lovat always took the greatest pleasure in instructing his friends in sporting matters. I never knew anyone able to throw a salmon-line better or more lightly, for his hands and the balance of his rod were perfection; and I have to thank him for having given me my first lesson in hooking and landing a salmon, and it was at the very spot, too, where John Bright came to grief. Lord Lovat always succeeded in getting a beginner to hook a fish either under or close to the bank at the head of the Groam Pool, as anyone, by merely dropping the fly at his feet when the water is at a certain height in the summer, is almost certain to hook a fish. I have heard of as many as 750 grilse and salmon being taken out of this pool in three hauls of the net, after it had been fished all day by three rods, neither of whom succeeded in getting a single rise, and who, as they had not seen as much as a fin all the day, had expressed their belief to the netters that there was not a fish in it.

It is a well-recognised fact that the more fish there are in a pool, where the bottom is smooth and devoid of rocks or stones, the more difficult it is to induce

them to rise, inasmuch as when they are frightened by reason of one of their number being 'moved,' they have nowhere to hide in, and they therefore lie huddled together for safety in such pools ; and unless the water is very high, and even then just the right kind of fly is used, they will not move, but as a rule run on to the higher reaches near the spawning ground. In such high water both grilse and peal will take the largest salmon-flies, if the water is slightly discoloured, but if clean, the usual standard flies must be used.

But to revert to my anecdote of John Bright. He was taken to the Groam Pool to try his luck, like many a man before him had been. He had never fished before, and evidently knew absolutely nothing about it. He was told to cast over a spot not more than three yards from him, but, without being perceived, he, thinking thereby to steady the line, contrived to give the latter a turn round his forefinger. The result when he hooked a fish, as he did at the very first cast, was that he gave an agonized yell, and forthwith tumbled straight into the river, the line having cut his finger nearly to the bone, he meanwhile throwing the rod away to free his finger. Lord Lovat, who had a gaff in his hand, quietly slipped it into Mr. Bright's nether garments and held him until he was pulled out by some friends who were near ; for the gillie had gone after the rod, and played the fish until Lord Lovat came up and killed it. Mr. Bright was forced to walk home and procure a change of clothes. Needless to add, he and Lord Lovat never failed to chaff each other about it ever afterwards.

Another gentleman once came to Beaufort to fish,

and rather unfortunately for himself, as it proved, informed everyone at dinner the first night that he had invented a new pattern of waders, and intended to try them the next day. He described how very advantageous his invention was, inasmuch as the waders, unlike the ordinary pattern, were made to button up the front, like 'trews.' Everyone present managed to keep countenance, and the next morning went out to see the invention tried, and found it a difficult matter to avoid roaring with laughter as the inventor proceeded to put on his garments, the whole performance savouring of 'Fribbles' in the Tommiebeg sporting. Having 'got them on,' our hero proceeded to enter the pool with a somewhat stately air, previously casting out some two yards of line, when one of the bystanders exclaimed: 'If you want to get fish you must go in much deeper, for they lie far out.' By degrees our friend was observed to appear a trifle uncomfortable, and gradually his waders filled. It was a bitterly cold day in March. 'Help!' he cried, 'or I shall be drowned!' and though he was but in little more than three feet of water, he could hardly drag himself out, amidst the roars of laughter which greeted him. However, I am forced to admit he bore it all very well, and put the best face on the matter he could.

I could fill pages with accounts of the curious and absurd things I have seen happen at times, but I will forbear to do so from a feeling of charity to my neighbours, and so leave them untold.

When the water has been high and dirty, I have killed pike with a 'Silver Doctor' of an inch and a half in length. Some years ago, when I was on the

point of going home, for the river was in very high flood and dirty, the gillie advised me to try a 'Silver Doctor,' adding that he was sure I should do well with it, as there was a considerable run of fish in the river. I took his advice, which proved to be good, for, with salmon and grilse, I succeeded in landing fifteen fish. This took place some ten years ago, on the Beauly, in July.

It is often a matter of surprise to old fishermen like myself, why the fish do not rise as well nowadays as they used to formerly; they seem to have become shy, and I am at a loss to understand why such is the case. Temperature of water, and such-like, cannot be the reason; and nowadays, when all tackle is so much improved and so perfect, the reverse might have reasonably been expected. But no; where I could hook as many as thirty grilse in a day, I cannot now get more than five or six, and consider myself lucky to do that much. I do not refer to such rivers as the Tweed, Dee, etc., which give good sport occasionally, but to those where there are always plenty of fish. In such rivers big scores appear to be a thing of the past. However, whatever may be the cause, fish have become most difficult to please with flies, and they seem to prefer a natural, or live, bait, and in many of the deep-running pools, eel-tails, prawns, small fry of either trout or salmon parr, are the most effectual lures.

I find the brass minnow, which is made more like a grub than a fish, is the most successful, not only in rivers, but in lakes, and especially for trout. It is a good plan to rub such minnows from time to time with a fish which may have been killed, for nothing attracts a fish to the lure more than smell, which is one of the

strongest senses possessed by fish, and if a pool is baited overnight, it will be full of fish the next day, the smell of the bait being doubtless carried down the stream to the pools below. When thus baiting a pool, it is as well to protect some of the worms from the fish by tying them up in canvas bags, so as not to overgorge the fish and thereby spoil the next day's sport. There are several other baits, other than worms, which can be made use of for the purpose, but worms are ever the most successful, by reason of their stronger scent.

Once, when baiting a pool on the Beaully, I was surprised to see some enormous eels come down stream to the bait, and I could never understand how they could have scented the bait from up-stream, unless it might have been by means of some eddy or back-water which I could not observe. Eels are, doubtless, strangely cute fish, and their travelling up and down stream, and at times on dry land during their migration, is very interesting. In Scotland, at all events in the Highlands, eels are despised as food, and are of but little market value, compared with the price they obtain in England and Ireland. The Highlander deems the eel unfit for food, whereas the English and Scotch esteem them as being a very great delicacy; an opinion in which, if they are properly cooked, I myself most thoroughly concur.

In a previous page I have made mention that the late Lord Lovat, when Master of Lovat, made a bet that he would kill a trout on a cobweb line. The bet was made with Colonel Sir R. Taylor, the colonel of the 79th Highlanders, and the fish was to be killed within a certain time. Lord Lovat failed to do so in

the time stipulated, but Sir R. Taylor gave him an extra day, going double or quits on the event, and Lord Lovat succeeded in killing a small trout of some three ounces in weight. The line was made of cobwebs, as stipulated, just strong enough to hold a tiny hook, and so the extraordinary feat was performed.

And now it remains for me to close yet another portion of the present work, and in doing so I sincerely wish my readers, if they have accompanied me thus far in my chatter on sport, the usual toast of one angler to another, viz., 'A tight line ;' and I may add, 'and many a one.'

PART V.—PRACTICAL FALCONRY.

Introductory—The peregrine—Procuring falcons—The eyas falcon—Season for taking eyasses—Cramps—Watching the eyrie and taking the eyases, etc.—Travelling by rail, etc.—Rearing young hawks—Hunger traces—Flying at hack—Care in feeding—‘Carrying’ to be checked—Places suitable for flying at hack—Notices—Use of the bow-net—Jessing and belling—Short-winged hawks—Hacking merlins and hobbies—Daily bath—Taking up from hack—In the mews—Intelligence of falcons—Colour of young birds—Training—Jesses and varvels—Swivels—Bells—Bewits—Blocks—Hawks to be kept apart—Bow-perch—The hood—To hood a hawk—The brail—The lure—Taking the soar—Hawking-glove—Meat-box—Carrying hawks—Reclaiming hawks—Varieties of hawks—Reclaiming haggards—Falconer’s calls—Entering—Health and condition—Bathing—Time for flying hawks—Hawks to be flown after casting—Affection of hawks for their master—Food—Shot birds not to be given to merlins—Woodcock hawking—Mr. Sinclair’s falcon—Use of merlins—Heron-hawking—Hawking with merlins—The hobby—The gyrfalcon—The saker—The goshawk—Performances of a female goshawk—Hare and rabbit hawking—The sparrow-hawk—Throwing a hawk—Blackbird hawking—Hawks on a journey—Imping—Coping—Diseases of hawks—Moulting—Conditioning after moulting—Restoring to health by hacking—Cramp—Lockjaw—Consumption—Apoplexy—Croaks—Laxatives—Frounce—Inflamed crop—Corns—Blain—Fractures—Parasites—Feathers—Glossary of terms.

I REGRET that want of space must somewhat prohibit my enlarging as fully as I could have desired upon the science of falconry. But in a work such as the present it is obviously impossible to do more than to endeavour to lay before the reader further instructions than are a

sufficient guide to a novice to enable him to train and fly his hawks to the best advantage, and to maintain them in health.

Of all hawks the peregrine is the most valuable to the falconer. For this reason I have selected it as the first on the list, and will endeavour to explain how easily it is trained.

It is docile, swift, courageous, and hardier than the generality of hawks. It is, perhaps, more widely distributed than the other hawks, doubtless by reason of its power and swift flight, which enables it to overtake the fastest-flying vermin, and rid many a man of diseased grouse. I am glad to say that this noble specimen of the hawk tribe is to be found in many places in England and Ireland, as well as in most of the Scotch forests, and there is but little difficulty in obtaining as many as are required. The former persecution of such a valuable bird has now almost entirely ceased, save on a few isolated moors where the keepers still harry it through ignorance of the benefits derivable from encouraging its breed, for the amount of hoodie and royston crows which it destroys very fully compensates for the few grouse, other than those which are diseased, which may fall a prey to it.

On moors where the falcon has become extinct, through the senseless extermination of such birds which formerly prevailed, the grouse have become unduly wild.

Anyone who may be desirous of obtaining falcons can now generally succeed in procuring them by advertising in the northern papers, such as the *Northern Chronicle*, *Inverness Chronicle*, *Scotsman*, etc. Keepers are only too glad to preserve them, for many of them

were loath to destroy such beautiful birds, but were ordered to do so, even though they might be on the nest.

The longer the young birds are left in the nest with the parent birds the better, nor should they ever be taken while the white down is on them. The season for taking them varies in different localities and according to the climate, season, etc. I have known them in Ireland fit to fly in the month of May; but as a rule, throughout Britain, they are not ready much before the 10th or 20th of June.

They may be said to be fit to take when the tail is some three inches in length and the white down has been replaced by feathers. If, however, they are taken before this period they are very likely to die of a disease called 'cramp' within a few days of their leaving the nest.

In every case where this disease appears the bird should be at once destroyed, for it is an incurable complaint, and the poor birds suffer the most excruciating agony. The disease may be easily recognised by the frequent cries of pain, the muscles contracting so as to bend the soft bones until they break, thereby rendering the bird useless.

The eyrie should be watched by means of a glass, and the proper time to take the young birds can be thereby easily ascertained. Keepers can generally form a very good opinion as to when it is advisable to take the birds, which they do by being let down to the nest by means of a rope held from above. The young birds should be well fed and put carefully into a basket lined with straw (not hay); then, when it has been carefully tied up, the basket must be very quietly drawn up. The operation requires great care, as the least damage

to the birds, even the breaking of a feather, renders them useless for flight for a considerable time.

The birds should always be well fed before starting on a journey, and should always travel at night, and by the fastest available train, as delay on the journey, or starvation, is apt to cause permanent injury.

Where but little space is available young hawks may be reared in a large hamper, the latter tied in a tree, the lid being so supported by cords as to make a platform for the young birds to come out and be fed on. In order to protect them from wind and rain the hamper should be covered with waterproofing, the lid serving as a ledge of rock. Of course, where there is a large barn or dry outbuilding which can be utilized, it is better to let the young birds have the run of it, and by leaving the doors open, they should be trained to come out to be fed at whistle or call.

They require to be very carefully and regularly fed twice daily. If this rule is not adhered to a disease known as 'hunger traces' will make its appearance. It may be recognised by the colour, or rather the defective colouring, which manifests itself in a line visible across the tail and wing feathers, when the latter are opened out, and a slight ridge may be felt where the mark exists on each feather. The feathers are very apt to break off at this mark. However, good and regular feeding will obviate the chances of such disease.

When they are fully grown the young birds may be allowed to fly at large. This is termed 'hacking.' The younger they are the greater care should be exercised in feeding them on tender food. When they are matured, raw lean beef may be given them, but up to that period, before which they are unable to digest

any harder food, young birds and rats, etc., are the best for them. They also require a few mouthfuls of feathers to make them 'cast.' These latter should be given with the meat at the evening or last feed. If feathers are not procurable, any fur or even cotton-wool mixed with their food will answer the purpose. Rabbits are excellent food for young hawks, and raw eggs mixed with the food are also very nutritious.

The young birds should never be permitted to carry, for if once they acquire the habit it is difficult to cure them of it; and afterwards, when hunting, they carry off their quarry, instead of resting on it until the falconer can take them up. When able to fly they can be fed on food tied to a board or on the 'lure,' the falconer giving them at the same time several pieces out of his hand.

The best places to fly at hack are barns or old buildings. The birds must be belled on the legs, and notices should be posted up in all the public-houses, blacksmiths' shops, post-offices, etc., in the neighbourhood, so that the people may be made aware of the presence of tame hawks, which sometimes take long flights before returning at feeding-time. The bells used are termed 'hack-bells,' and are larger and louder than those used when flying trained hawks.

When the birds go too far and begin to kill, they can be taken with a bow-net, or snared with a noose of soft cord. Before being turned out they must be provided with 'jesses' and bells, and by these means even old hawks may be kept at hack; but they must be always well fed before they are turned out or they will go off. When hungry they will come at once to the lure, and a few days of such practice will suffice to

render most hawks obedient and come at once to call.

There are only two short-winged hawks—viz., the sparrow-hawk and the goshawk—and these hawks are *never* hacked, because they get their power of flight at once. All the other hawks are long-winged, and require hacking if they have been taken from the nest.

The smaller falcons, such as the merlin and hobby, must not be hacked with their big cousins the peregrines, but elsewhere, lest the latter should kill them.

Hawks should have a bath daily, so that if no stream exists, a bath must be put down flat into the ground and kept fresh.

When taken up from hack, say in about three weeks, they should be tied to a block on a grass-plot, and removed at night to a darkened room or mews, and fastened to canvased perches, the canvas, which should reach nearly to the ground, preventing their feathers from being broken.

Hawks are kept unhooded in the mews, which must be kept perfectly dark, and so tied to the perch as not to be able to reach each other, which might otherwise be fatal. I may, indeed, as well here remark that when ‘weathering’ out of doors they must also be unhooded. The floor of the mews must be covered with sand or sawdust, and the walls should be whitewashed, and everything kept scrupulously clean.

Like a sagacious dog or horse, falcons soon learn to recognise the voice and step of their master.

The colour of the young birds is brown, the feathers of the back and wings being edged with a lighter tint, the colour of the breast and thighs being rufous, and

with dark-brown streaks running lengthwise on them. While in and when just out of the nest they are blue, but they differ very much in colour. The 'cere,' or eyelid, is first blue, but eventually becomes yellow.

After being taken up from hack the training may be commenced, and they should at first be exercised by strong flights and 'stoops' at the lure; but it is a mistake to attempt to hurry on their education. Time must be allowed, for hawks differ in character, and some take much longer than others to become tractable, and they should, in order to make them so, be constantly carried on the wrist. After such training they soon get used to crowds.

Previously to this they may require new jesses, and I may as well here explain how this is done. A narrow strip of tough and strong leather, such as is termed 'kip' in the trade, is put on the hawk's legs, in order to hold the bird by. The leather must be kept soft and pliable with grease ('Gishurstine' is best). The name of the falconer used to be placed on 'varvels,' which were fastened by rings to the jesses.

When the hawk is fastened to the block, and when varvels are not used, a swivel made of brass or iron is put on the jesses by means of a slit in the ends of the latter, both jesses being fastened to one loop of the swivel; the leash, which is also made of strong kip leather, and which is furnished with a button at its thicker end, being passed through the other loop, and fastened to an iron staple at the side of the block or bow-perch by means of the falconer's knot.

Indian bells are the best, and they should be fastened on the leg of the hawk, above the jesses, by means of narrow strips of leather called 'bewits.' The bell

can be fastened on while the hawk is hooded on the wrist.

The shape of the block should represent that of a flower-pot turned upside down. A long iron pin is driven in the bottom to ensure the block remaining firm in the ground, and there must also be a gagged staple at the top to tie the leash to. For merlin lanners and sakers the blocks should be more like a wine-glass, upright in shape, for such hawks 'mute' very short. These blocks may be from nine to twelve inches in height, and four or five inches in diameter at the top, and tapering off to the iron spike at the bottom, the leash being fastened to a staple on the top. This is necessary for all hawks which mute near their blocks, in order that their plumage may be preserved from being soiled.

When on the screen at night or in cold weather, the birds must not be allowed to touch the ground or walls with their wings, or reach each other when 'bating.'

The newest and best 'bow-perch' is made of iron, well-padded and covered with leather, the ring to which the hawk is fastened coming through the leather at the top (Plate II.).

The hood is one of the most important of the various necessities for hawks, and is the most difficult to obtain well made; and every falconer should learn how it is and should be made. That for the peregrine and goshawk is made of three pieces of leather, the best being calf, which is easily procured from any saddler, such as bridles are made of. For the smaller hawks, pig-skin, such as is used for saddles, will be found to be stiff enough. The best description of

hood is Fig. 1, Plate V., and Fig. 2, Plate V. It is easily made, the leather being cut as shown in Plate V., and then sewn together, and the edges bevelled off to make a neat seam. When both sides have been sewn, the whole should be damped with a wet sponge, and fashioned into shape on a block cut in the shape and size of the hawk's head for which it is required; and it must be well bossed out where the eyes come, or else it might very possibly cause injury to the latter. The hood having been fastened on to this block, it must be allowed to dry thoroughly, and so take its shape. The lower edge is then bound with either a strip of leather or damp parchment; the plume, by which the hood is held, is attached to the top, and the 'braces,' or strings, are added with holes through which to lace them. The plume may be made of any colour which the maker may select, the feathers forming it being tied with waxed thread. A couple of slits having been made in the leather hood, a piece of leather is put through them and stitched to the plume, and the coloured silk or worsted is drawn through and secured by a few turns of waxed thread, the whole being lapped with fine wire.

The braces are made of two strips of tough leather, with a knot at the end, the knot being made after passing the leather through three slits cut at the back of the hood and crossed to the opposite side; so that the short braces open the hood and the others draw it tight. The space required for the beak to protrude through may be cut to suit the particular hawk for which the hood is made.

The Dutch hoods are excellent, and are to be much preferred to any others (Plate I., Fig. 7).

To hood a hawk well requires a considerable deal of practice, and some little degree of manual dexterity. The following is the way the operation should be performed. The tassel must be held between the second and third fingers, and the hood in the palm of the right hand. Then the hood must be quickly but gently pushed over the head, in the same way in which an experienced trainer slips the bridle over the head of a young and nervous horse. The beak will at once appear through the opening prepared for it, and the hooder's teeth being applied to the button on the braces, the fingers can pull the other ends as tightly as may be required to keep the hood on.

Hawks must always be hooded when on the left hand, the right doing the work, and on no account should the bird be frightened.

It is a good plan to give the hawk a piece of meat, and hood it whilst it is engaged eating. If it resists it must be taken into a dark room, where it is an easy matter to hood any wild hawk without frightening it. No struggle must take place, or the hood will never be forgotten. The 'brail' is sometimes used, but I am of opinion that it does more harm than good. Some people wet the bird, and this is a far better plan. (I may as well remark for the benefit of the reader that a 'brail' is a thong of soft leather in which there is a slit, and through which the first joint of the wing is passed for the purpose of securing the bird.)

The lure is used in the training of all long-winged hawks, as by its means they are kept on the wing and taken down. A lure may be of any shape, but it must be heavy enough to prevent its being carried by a

falcon, and also soft enough to avoid the feet of the latter being injured when striking at it. A piece of iron or heavy wood of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. in weight is covered with a thick layer of tow. Over this two pieces of strong leather in the shape of a heart are firmly stitched together, the extreme width of the leather at its upper portion being from four to five inches. To this two sets of strings are attached, by which the meat or wings of birds (the latter being the more attractive) are fastened. A strong swivel is fixed on to the upper part, and to this a strong leathern strap is attached ; the latter may be furnished with a tassel at its end. The lure is then swung round the head of the falconer, or thrown to a distance, as may be desired. I always make use of a lure of the above description, as also a long piece of cord with wings tied to it, so that when I desire to train a bird which is not in good wind, I can constantly make it repeat its stoops, by snatching away the lure after it falls on the ground before the stooping falcon has seized or struck it. The above is a good plan where a hawk is mounting badly, and it will get so vexed at missing its quarry, that if it is a good bird and worth training it will mount higher, until it gets its reward on so doing by being allowed to have a 'crop-fall.'

The higher the peregrine rises the more valuable it is for hawking purposes, as it thereby commands a more extensive sweep of ground. I have at times lost such hawks by reason of their circling too high and inside the clouds. This is termed 'taking to the soar'; but if a live pigeon with 'jess' on is let go, the falcon will sometimes come into sight, when the pigeon may be pulled up again and the lure made use of,

when the hawk must be hooded for some time. Hawks are apt to soar in hot weather.

The buckskin glove which is used for hawking is made to go half-way up to the elbow. It is only used on the left arm. It is in shape like a Heavy Dragoon buckskin gauntlet. For goshawks it requires to be made double over the forefinger and thumb.

A small tin box, in which to carry meat, and made so as to fit in the pocket, is also useful.

Hawks ought to be taken out on the hand a great deal until they are quite drilled. Wild-caught birds will struggle terribly after being caught, but the hood, hunger, and want of sleep soon tames them. When being carried, stroking them quietly with a soft feather about the breast and thighs seems to have a soothing effect on them. Wild hawks require to be drilled from morning until night. They must be made hungry and then brought out and flown at the lure, in a string, and by this means the wildest hawks can be tamed in the course of a few days.

I first learned falconry and all connected with it from the Circassians and Syrians, perhaps the best falconers in the world; but my time has been so much taken up in the pursuit of other sports, that I must refer my readers for more minute instructions than I can offer to the work on falconry entitled '*Falconry in the British Isles*,' by Messrs. Salvin and Brodrick, which is the best work of the kind.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF HAWKS.

The falcons or long-winged hawks are distinguished from the true or short-winged hawks by the three following and never-failing characteristics, viz.:

a. By the tooth on the upper mandible. (This in some of the foreign species is not so clear.)

b. By the second primary feather being the longest, or equal in length to the third.

c. By the colour of the eye, which in the falcon is dark, and in the short-winged hawks is yellow.

I have trained haggards, or wild hawks, which have been caught with the bow-net abroad, perfectly in three weeks. This is done by keeping them awake at night and during the day, until tame; but of course the aid of several assistants is necessary to carry this system out. A light must be kept close to them all through the night, and no chance of sleeping allowed them.

The instant the hawk takes to feeding from the fist it ought to fly to it, and when so keen should be tried and let go in a string. It is first tried at a short distance from the lure, the distance to the latter being increased. When perfect at a dead lure it may be introduced to the live lure, which is generally a pigeon in a string. Its education is now nearly completed if it is not frightened when the falconer goes to take it up on the lure, and if it continues to eat all the time; and it may be said to be finished when it has been trained to come to the falconer's calls, the best I know being 'Helover!' 'Helaw!' 'Helope!' but hawks work more by eye than ear to the trainer they know.

When game rises, and the hawk is soaring somewhere above, the trainer should shout loudly in a high key, 'Hoo-ha-ha-ha!' which call somewhat resembles a wild laugh. This will at once attract the attention of the hawk if the latter is not too far away; or instead of

this call a dog-whistle with a high, shrill note may be used, provided the bird has been trained to it.

When the hawk is perfect at the dead and live 'lures' it can be entered at whatever quarry it is required to be flown at. If at partridge or grouse a few, say three, should be netted and let out when the hawk is mounted. They will easily take partridges after grouse when entered in the same way. It is sometimes necessary with a shy bird to let a grouse or a partridge go on a string, and perhaps this may have to be repeated, the string being each time shortened, until at last the partridge, or whatever bird may be used, can be let go without any string at all.

After these encouraging lessons the hawk is ready for the field, but the falconer should have a live pigeon in his bag, to let go in case the falcon should be disappointed in its first flight; if not it may be lost the next time of trying, by going off after some other quarry.

At first 'eyasses' should only be tried at young birds. When they kill well they sometimes become too confident, and try their hand at some old cock grouse, which may take them a long way. With such birds a disposition to stray often occurs, and they require to be carefully watched, and brought in with the 'lure' when they appear to be soaring away, as they are apt to do in hot, sunny weather, and not allowed out any longer until they are in better 'yarak'—hunting condition.

HEALTH AND CONDITION.

The chief point which the falconer has now to study, in order to enjoy good sport with his hawk, is to keep

and maintain it in health and condition. When in health, a falcon should have a full, clear eye, a glossy plumage and a good appetite, without which latter it would not fly at game. The higher the condition the better, but some birds eat more than others; this must be watched by their owner. Some, again, will only fly well when they are fat.

The more hawks are in the open air the better. They should never be flown in a country where there is much wire; a stoop after a grouse, or even a slow flight, against such an obstruction is probably fatal.

When a hawk has had its bath, and has to fly the same day, it must be left unhooded to dry itself.

The afternoon is the best time to fly hawks at any quarry; but if the falconer is the owner of a moor, and wants wild birds to lie, he cannot do better than fly his falcon over it, and take it in after a few high circles, being careful not to put up any grouse. When the bird is taken in the shooting may proceed.

Hawks should never be flown until they have 'cast,' for if this is not observed they will rake away, and will not be easily taken in again until they have 'cast,' if at all, but will then fly at some quarry perhaps miles away. They should never be flown until they are keen, or what is termed 'in yarak,' which means 'keen with hunger,' and this they are not until late in the day, unless they 'cast' in the night or early morning. They require to be better fed during the winter than in the summer, and the colder the weather the more food they should have. In cold and wet weather they should be 'gorged' every fourth day.

Some hawks get very fond of their trainers, the

merlin being the most affectionate of all the hawks of which I have had experience.

Fresh beef must be given carefully to hawks which are not in work, and when they are in too high condition their food must be reduced a little and gradually. Rabbits, wood-pigeons, small birds, mice, and rats are good food. The skin of a crow or a pigeon, turned inside out and dipped in blood, makes excellent 'casting.'

Goshawks are not as particular as other hawks, and will eat rats, mice, squirrels, etc., with evident relish. Lanners love mice.

Half-frozen meat is very bad food for hawks. They must not be fed too fast on cut meat; it is better to tear it for them with the hands, putting it into their mouths.

By giving shot birds to the delicate merlin inflammation may be produced. Fresh oxtail is very good food for hawks which are on the block, out of work, letting them jump from the block to the hand for it.

In my estimation a woodcock gives the best of all sport; but it is dangerous work, for the woodcock can fly and dodge the falcon as well, if not better, than any quarry.

In Messrs. Salvin and Brodrick's work there is a curious account of Mr. Sinclair's falcon, flown from Rossmore Park in Monaghan County, in Ireland, to Aberdeen, where an ignorant farmer shot this celebrated falcon, with the owner's name on its 'varvels.'

Merlins, both the male and female, are the best for hawking larks, as they are fast and active. The female merlin, being the larger and stronger, is better for pigeons.

HERON-HAWKING.

The Dutch falconers have introduced us to the best way of hawking herons, which is done by going down wind with the falcon (two generally being used) from the heronry, where the falconer awaits the return of the old birds from fishing. When they are viewed, a scout (who is posted to give notice) gives the warning cry of 'Au vol!' When the heron is seen to be sufficiently near to the falconer, the latter lets go his brace of falcons down wind, one a little before the other, when they mount in circles until they are uppermost, and a terrific stooping takes place.

When the heron sees the falcons coming down wind on her, she mounts in circles, uttering a loud cry, and proceeds to disgorge the contents of her crop—eels, frogs, fish, etc.—in order that she may lighten herself, and thus be more active, and so outfly the falcons by rising above them. It is one of the finest flights in falconry, for frequently all three birds are seen going in different directions. The heron, having had the start of its pursuers, is enabled to gain a height which the falcons cannot do without taking a long, spiral course, so as to mount higher than the heron. The higher the heron goes the more the falcons use this spiral flight, until, when almost out of sight, they rise above their quarry.

After a time, when the quarry is knocked about a good deal, the falcons 'bind' upon her, and all descend until they are near the earth, when the falcons 'un-bind' to avoid the shock. Very often when the first hawk strikes the heron shifts her flight, in order to avoid the stoop; but the second falcon, which is 'wait-

ing on' for its opportunity, generally finds it the instant that the heron is intent on avoiding the stoop of the first falcon. These flights are very grand to witness.

I have known a good light heron give a brace of falcons twenty stoops, and beat them in the end.

Everything naturally depends on the quality and condition of the falcons. There was in the year 1844 a hawk named Loo which generally took her heron in the third stoop, single-handed (*vide* Salvin and Brodrick).

When using the merlin the falconer should remember to take out some live larks with him, so that he can take down his hawk if disappointed in a kill, after the first or second trial. It is also a good plan to have a dead lark, and to throw it out when disappointed too often.

The merlin clutches its victim by the throat until it is quite dead; the falcon breaks the neck or opens the jugular vein, while the short-winged hawks kill with the foot, being provided by nature with long and sharp talons, and a powerful foot for the purpose.

THE HOBBY.

The hobby, the most beautiful little falcon we have, has become rare in England, though I have of late years seen a few in Scotland. It is very easily tamed. It will 'wait on' for a long time. For its size, its wings are larger than those of any falcon, so that its pace is simply terrific. It was formerly used for bird-catching, as larks will not rise when this hawk is over them. At one time these little hawks were sold in Leadenhall Market, where the falconer may still find them at times. They are easily trained to a light 'lure' with small birds.

THE JER OR GYR-FALCON.

These beautiful birds are sometimes to be seen even in England, but as a rule they are persecuted for stuffing as curiosities. They are known by the three names of 'Iceland,' 'Greenland,' and 'Norway' falcons. I have come across a few specimens of the Greenland in Caithness-shire, as also of the snowy owl. They are not uncommon in several places in the North of Scotland. The country is suited for them; and no doubt, if they were not disturbed, they would settle and breed there. The nestling birds are dark until after the first moult. The Iceland falcons were formerly preserved by the King of Denmark, and were presented to the hawking establishments of other Courts.

When hawking with H.H. the Maharajah Duleep Singh, in 1859, these hawks were valued at £16 apiece, and sometimes more; but, in my estimation, I think that the peregrine gives more satisfaction.

They were much used in former times for flying the kite, like the saker. They are trained in exactly the same way as the peregrine. The heat of the sun is bad for them, as they come from a cold climate. The Greenland is oftener seen in this country than the Iceland. I have at times, when shooting, mistaken them for sea-gulls at first. The late Lord Lovat shot a fine specimen, a female, at Beaufort.

THE SAKER.

This falcon is good at smaller game, such as grouse, partridge, etc. In India she is flown at the kite, and affords grand sport. One which was just trained and

doing well was killed with a hunting-whip. I could record many a similar story, where a tame hawk has been killed by reason of its having flown too far from its master, and, having had sufficient confidence even in a stranger to allow the latter to catch him and return him to his owner, has instead been ruthlessly knocked on the head, and thus the labour and value of months of training have been destroyed, the owner's name on the 'varvels' being seen when too late. Such was the fate of a 'saker' belonging to one of my sons.

THE GOSHAWK.

Though the goshawk used at one time to breed in Britain, it is now but rarely if ever seen there. Passage goshawks can be obtained from Valkenswaard when migrating over the great wastes of that part of Holland. Young goshawks may be procured in France, Germany, Norway, and Syria; they are chiefly used for hares and rabbits. I myself introduced the hawking of Alpine hares, with the most satisfactory results. The goshawk is said to be used in India for the gazelle.

This hawk is so strong that both the 'leash' and 'jesses' must be made as stout as they well can be, for they are very fond of 'bating.' Some people prefer the use of seal leather for the purpose, but my own practical experience has decided in favour of dog-skin as being far superior to any other.

In using a goshawk she must be held by the 'jesses,' which should be made rather long, the 'leash' being removed from the rings or 'varvels.'

The goshawk is seldom lost, as it comes down to its

master better than any other hawk ; besides which its flights are short, swift, and decisive, as I have proved when using it on the white Alpine hares, a report of the same having appeared in the *Field* of the 14th of February, 1882, by Mr. Salvin. The bag made by the hawk there, referred to for that season was : 2 brown hares, 4 mountain hares, 209 rabbits, 51 rats, 2 squirrels, etc.

The goshawk should be trained to sit quietly on the wrist, in order that it may see the quarry at once, no hood being ever used except when travelling. After being trained to be indifferent to a crowd, horses, cats, dogs, etc., it should be taught to return to the wrist for a piece of meat. This hawk must never be flown except when in 'yarak,' which is manifest by the movement of her head, and keeping her mouth shut. These birds require to be carried for an hour or two daily. The male is of little use except for pheasants near at hand, partridges which are easily approached, moor-hens, landrails, etc. They will hold rabbits if they catch them fairly by the head.

As soon as the goshawk is trained to kill one or two trapped rabbits, she may be let off the wrist at one found lying out, and after this her education is easily completed. She soon learns to know ferrets, dogs, and her master. If she is expected to kill hares, she must be flown at small leverets, and then at larger ones up to a full-grown hare.

It is necessary to exercise all hawks in order to keep them in health and training. Goshawks and sparrow-hawks may be placed in a 'creance' on a gate, at some little distance from the falconer, and made to fly from it to his fist to be fed. As soon as the

goshawk will take rabbits in a 'creance,' it may be considered fit for the field. If it is intended to fly the bird at hares, it must, in order to take them well, be kept to them only.

A goshawk may be flown every day, and all day, if her strength is maintained by being given a little to eat after each kill. In using her on hares and rabbits, this food may be taken from the head of the quarry, such as the brain, eye, tongue, or cheeks, and this will serve to teach her to seize them by one foot and grip them behind with the other, thereby bringing them on their side. Moorhens should not be given for food. A retriever or Clumber-spaniel is the best kind of dog for use with a goshawk; and it is interesting to watch how soon both hawk and dog play into each other's hands, and the good feeling which they evince towards each other. If the hawk is not in good condition, a hare will soon pump her out. When any hawk is kept on stands or blocks, it should be protected from turkeys, peacocks and puppies: full-grown cats and dogs will not touch it.

Mr. Salvin records the following performance of a goshawk—a female hawk—in her fourth year, which took ten rabbits, holding nine of them, three of them being half-grown and six old ones. The following day she took two old hares of eight pounds weight apiece, and two old rabbits. On the third day she caught an old hare, which broke away and got off, but held five leverets and one old rabbit.

After a hare or rabbit has been frequently doubling, the hawk becomes exhausted and at times sulky, and will stand panting on the ground regardless of the quarry, which probably escapes. Occasionally hares

and rabbits are taken by the goshawk at a head-long, dashing flight into covert, just as they are dwelling for a second before entering it. At other times they will break away and be retaken. A rabbit may be captured by the hawk at the very mouth of the hole, the hawk holding on with one foot to its prey, and pressing the other on the ground, its tail and wings being expanded in order to avoid being dragged in with the rabbit.

THE SPARROW-HAWK.

This bird is perhaps the boldest of all hawks. I have, in Italy, killed as many as twenty couple of quail in one day with one female sparrow-hawk. She was a wild bird, which, with the assistance of a Syrian falconer, I trained in a fortnight.

As is well known, the sparrow-hawk will dart through a window after its quarry. Once, when ferreting rabbits near to a bridge of some four feet in width, built over a small drain, and leading to a gateway, whilst I was standing on the bridge, a male sparrow-hawk dashed after a linnet through the arch just under my feet, and killed it in a ditch about a hundred yards further on.

The sparrow-hawk should be trained from the wrist, and when fit to fly it may be flown from the hand, or thrown, as in India, at the quarry. When thrown, the motion is similar to overhand bowling at cricket. I killed the quail to which I referred in this manner.

In order to thus throw a hawk it must be carried on the right wrist, and when it is to be thrown it is

taken gently in the left hand, which grasps the bird round the body above the thighs ; it is then lifted and transferred to the right hand, the breast lying on the palm of the hand, the legs extended along the tail. When the game rises the bird is thrown, without any more jerking or squeezing than is absolutely necessary to keep her level and to go straight. She will not exert herself to fly, if properly thrown, until the force of the throw is expended.

The sparrow-hawk is very delicate, and requires to be kept well fed. A little food should be given in the morning without castings, and a good meal at night.

The young birds must not be taken from the nest until they are fledged or they will die of cramp, to which they are very subject when they are young. They must be well rewarded after every flight, or they will get sulky.

Of all quarry the cock blackbird is the best for sport, when it can be got into a hedgerow and flown at with a female sparrow-hawk. The bird is not then thrown, and it requires a great deal of assistance from the field. It is most exciting sport, exactly like magpie hawking with a peregrine tiercel.

TREATMENT OF HAWKS ON A JOURNEY.

Hawks when travelling by train are tied to a 'box-cadge,' with their tails inwards in order to catch their mates. They must not be too near together, lest they should grab each other. They must be free from casting. Sawdust must be put into the box-cadge to receive the mates, and on reaching their journey's end they should be tied to their blocks or stands. A new stand has been introduced, which is made of iron and

padding on the top with leather. It takes up but little room, and is suitable for all kinds of hawks; but they must, of course, be made according to the sizes of the hawks. If by chance there is no block available, a garden flower-pot inverted will answer the purpose, the hawk being fastened to an eyed-pin driven into the ground near to it.

IMPING AND COPING.

An injury to the feathers of a hawk is remedied by what is termed 'imping.' When a feather is broken and not lost, the same feather is used again, or, if lost, is supplied by the falconer, who should always keep a collection of spare feathers from hawks which have moulted or which may have died. When the feather is broken sufficiently high up, an imping-needle can be inserted into it, the feather being cut so as to exactly fit the shaft of the one containing the imping-needle, and which is to go on to it. When this latter is pushed home it is as tight as a natural feather. Imping-needles,* which are triangular and pointed at both ends, can be bought of different sizes, and kept ready for use for the different hawks which may be kept by the falconer.

The corresponding feathers of another bird must be used, for the hawk cannot fly nor steer straight if the feathers are not exactly matched.

Any falconer can make his own imping-needles, by sharpening both ends of a piece of iron wire with a file in a triangular shape. The best can be made from glovers' needles, which are triangular in shape at the

* They are made by Mr. Aston, Feltwell, Brandon, Suffolk.

pointed end, and consequently only require to be filed into the like shape at the eye end.

All feathers cast at the moult should be kept in a moth-tight box.

When cutting the feather on the hawk, the cut should be made in a slanting direction, so as to exactly match the one which is to be fixed on. The needle should be previously dipped in salt and water to cause it to rust, and thereby retain a better and firmer hold. It should be forced equally far into the pith or centre of both the feathers.

When the feather is broken far down towards the body, the best plan is to cut the new feather about an inch too long, then, having cut off the end and opened the sides, dip it in glue or cobbler's-wax, and push it into the hollow of the feather left in the bird, and fasten it in by passing a needle and waxed thread through both shafts. Injury to a tail-feather is best remedied when the bird is sitting hooded on another man's fist. For the wings, the bird must be held carefully by a second person, with its breast upon a soft pillow, the holder of the bird placing both his thumbs down the channel of its back to keep it firmly down. He must not press on the bird's stomach, but place his fingers upon its breast. Its feet, wrapped up in a cloth, must be stretched out behind.

'Coping' is a term applied to the process of shortening the beak or talons of falcons. It is best performed by means of a pair of sharp wire-cutters, the cut part being afterwards scraped with a knife or a small file. Wild falcons, when fresh caught, are always 'coped,' to secure the falconer from injury. The beaks of trained eyases are also coped; they must not be

allowed to grow too long, as if so they are very liable to split and break off, and prevent the bird feeding with comfort.

DISEASES OF HAWKS.

It would hardly do for me to close this already scanty portion of the present work without making reference to the diseases to which hawks are subject, and, by permission of Mr. Salvin, I feel I cannot do better than quote from his work regarding such ailments.

Moulting.

Moulting, though not a disease, may be termed an annual ailing, for birds are necessarily weak at that period, which occurs later with passage than with eyas falcons. Suffice it, however, to explain that eyas falcons of the previous year, if kept in good condition, may be said to begin to moult from about the middle of March or early in April. When older, they moult somewhat later. The sooner they begin to moult, the sooner they will get their plumage again. Roughly speaking, the period which intervenes between the moult of the first feather (always the seventh wing-feather) to the time when the plumage is perfected, is about eight months. Thus, quoting from Mr. Salvin's experiences, I get the following statistics :

First Feather Moulded.				Perfect Plumage.
9th April	-	-	-	- 1st October.
(Eyas Falcon) 8th March	-	-	-	- 3rd October.
(Passage-hawk) 18th May	-	-	-	- 4th December.

As I have said, the seventh wing-feather is the first moulted, then one by one the secondary feathers, then

the shoulders and breast, and lastly the tail and the primary feathers, the first of the latter being the last feather cast.

Different systems are advocated and adopted for keeping hawks in the best health and condition during moulting. Some people prefer to keep them in work throughout the moulting period, but maintaining them in high condition, and giving ample and additional shelter during bad weather.

Where hawks are used during the time they are in moult, they are longer in regaining their plumage. On the other hand, unless they receive a sufficient amount of exercise during the long period of inactivity, they are apt to lose power of wing.

Perhaps the best plan is to place the birds singly, or two or three of the same sex together, in a large, warm loft, the floor being covered with sand, and the beams with matting, and a bath always at hand for them; but the loft must be very warm, as this warmth will assist the moulting process, and, by reason of the birds being able to fly about and exercise themselves, they come out in good condition, weakened but little by the moulting, and almost as active on the wing as previous to it. In the case of goshawks, each bird must be kept in a separate room, as they are otherwise certain to fight. Passage-hawks, requiring to be kept in lower condition than nestlings, moult later, and are longer in regaining their plumage.

In order to render the new feathers broad and strong, hawks must be very well kept when moulting. Beef entirely as food is too stimulating. A variety of food with castings, such as warm pigeons, rooks, rabbits, and the yolk of a raw egg added to the beef, which

latter must be cut up into small pieces, is recommended.

When hawks have, by reason of idleness and good feeding, become very fat during the moulting time, it requires some care and attention to bring them into flying condition. Starvation will not answer, but the best plan is to recommence the training entirely, as if with a young bird, as soon as the quill of the first primary feather has become hardened. The food may be slightly reduced by degrees, on alternate days, the hawk carried about as much as possible, and a full gorge every four or five days. On the day after the gorge, little or no food need be given. The first time it is flown again, it should be at the lure, and very sharp-set, and well rewarded for obedience.

If hawks get out of health they may often be cured by being flown at 'hack.' Large bells should be used, but before being turned out the bird should be lightly fed two hours after having received a dose of rhubarb.

Cramp.

Cramp is the most fatal of all diseases to which hawks are liable. I have referred to it previously.

Lockjaw.

A case has been quoted where a falcon, having injured its foot, died from the above disease.

Consumption.

This in a hawk is very similar to the same complaint in the human being. Cold and wet and general neglect tend to produce it, though if treated soon enough it may be overcome by warmth, proper food and exercise.

Apoplexy.

Goshawks are liable to this disease, but peregrines very rarely suffer from it. Nine out of ten of the sparrow-hawks and merlins which are trained yearly die from it. Flying at 'hack' is the best remedy.

'Kecks,' or 'Croaks.'

So called from the noise made by the bird, when affected with the complaint, when flying or 'bating.' It is a disease of the breathing organs, and is peculiar to peregrines—passage-hawks and nestlings suffering equally. Exposure, especially during autumn and spring, induces it. It is, though common, not a dangerous complaint, if treated properly in time. Rest, warmth, good diet, with occasionally some half-dozen bruised peppercorns, or mustard-seed, given with the castings, will generally effect a cure.

Whenever it may be desired to administer a laxative, a little powdered sugar, or two or three grains of powdered rhubarb, between a mouthful of meat, will answer the purpose, but it must be given on a fasting stomach, and the bird must not have had any 'castings' previously. Dipping a few pieces of meat in water will also have a similar effect, but of course the rhubarb has the most marked result.

Frounce.

This is similar to the complaint to which children are subject, and which is termed 'thrush,' and is an inflammatory condition of the mucous membrane. It arises from cold and damp. Peregrines suffer from it rather than goshawks. The bird cannot eat, its tongue being swollen and covered with a brownish-

white coating. It, however, yields to treatment if taken in time, but if neglected will prove fatal.

An old-fashioned remedy for it is to scrape the furred skin off the tongue by means of a quill cut like a pen, but not split, until the tongue bleeds, and to freely apply a little burnt alum mixed with vinegar, lemon-juice, or citric acid, allowing some of the mixture to pass down the throat. Light, nourishing diet of birds, rabbits, or mice (but not beef), and warmth, are the best assistance to effecting a cure. The dressing should be applied every other day, and if it is not strong enough a little nitrate of silver may be substituted for it after the third day. It should only *just touch* the place after the latter has been scraped.

Inflammation of the Crop.

Falcons and hawks are alike subject to this complaint, which is evidenced by the bird throwing up its food an hour or two after feeding. Little and light food, and a dose of rhubarb on alternate days, will cure it.

Corns.

Falcons are liable to the formation of small tumours on their feet and toes, and also to swelling of their joints generally. Although these are termed 'corns,' they are really indurated cysts, which may be removed by cutting them with a sharp knife if the swellings are along the toes. Where, however, the ball and joint of the foot is swollen the cure is not so easy.

The use of a soft block or a sod to stand on is a remedy and preventive. Tincture of iodine or strong acetic acid may be beneficially applied. Where soft blocks are used corns will not occur.

Blain.

This is a serious malady, supposed to be peculiar to passage-hawks. It is a formation of watery vesicles in the second joint of the wing. It is difficult to cure, and if neglected will produce stiff-joint. Nestlings are subject to it during their first year, or to a complaint very similar to it, the roots of the primary feathers, when nearly full-grown, breaking off short to the wing. Fresh feathers may probably come again at the first moult, but the stumps must not be forcibly extracted.

Fractures.

These, whether simple or compound, may be effectually treated if in the leg or thigh of the bird. It is more difficult to bring about a cure if they occur in the shoulder or wing, false-joint being liable to form.

In a case of simple fracture, the bone when set may be wrapped up in a starch bandage, or gutta-percha splints, which latter can be softened by steeping them in hot water previously to their being adjusted. In about three weeks' time the bandage may be removed, and the bird will be found well and strong again.

In a case of compound fracture no bandage must be applied until the inflammation has been relieved by repeated bathings in warm water, and the bandage must be arranged so as to be easily removed when required from time to time.

The bird must be kept in a darkened room and fed twice daily on light diet, such as the flesh of a rabbit, given by hand, and cut up into small pieces.

Parasites.

Hawks are subject to three parasitical insects, and they often prove very troublesome to them.

The first is a kind of flying tick, similar to those on swallows, young black-game, etc. Merlins alone are most subject to them after they have left the nest, but as soon as they begin to bathe they leave them. They most probably come from the ground, the merlin breeding on it.

All hawks, passage-hawks and hobbies especially, are subject to lice. These may be got rid of by means of a strong decoction of tobacco-water, which, after it is strained, should be supplemented by a similar quantity of brandy or other spirit, the head, neck, and shoulders of the bird being well dressed by means of a camel's-hair brush dipped in the liquid. If one dressing is not sufficient it may be repeated. Regular bathing is the best preventive.

The third and worst parasite is a species of acarus, which first appears in the nares of the bird, and burrows into them, and also into the eyelids. If these are not speedily eradicated, they will rapidly cover the whole body of the bird. Merlins are more subject to them than falcons; but where one hawk is affected, all the others near it will soon suffer in like manner. If the nares appear at all sore they must be well washed out with the same mixture as recommended for lice, a smaller brush being used for the purpose, and thrust well into them. They should also be carefully examined, in order to detect the presence of any small, dark-red mites. If these are visible daily attention must be given, the nares and eyelids being frequently washed,

and a small quantity of ointment of red precipitate of mercury applied. The bird must be isolated.

FEATHERS.

Should a wing or tail feather be accidentally pulled out, the hole must be plugged at once by means of a small piece of cotton-wool, which has been dipped in grease or honey, in order to prevent the inflammation closing it up. If this is kept in its place for a few days a new feather will probably make its appearance.

A GLOSSARY OF THE FALCONRY TERMS USED IN THE FOREGOING.

- Bate.**—To flutter off the fist, block, etc.
Bewits.—Strips of leather by which the bells are fastened to the legs.
Bind.—To fasten on the quarry whilst in the air.
Block.—The conical piece of wood on which falcons are placed.
Brail.—A thong of soft leather in which there is a slit, through which the first joint of a hawk's wing is passed in order to secure the bird.
Cadge.—A wooden frame on which hawks are carried to the field.
Carry.—For the hawk to fly away with the quarry.
Castings.—Feathers, fur, or tow given with the meat to a hawk to cleanse the gorge.
Cere.—The naked, wax-like skin above the beak.
Come to.—To begin to obey the falconer.
Coping.—Shortening the bill and talons of a hawk.
Crabbing.—Hawks seizing each other.
Creance.—A long string.
Enter.—To fly the hawk at quarry for the first time.
Eyas.—A nestling hawk.
Falcon.—The female peregrine, also a general term for all long-winged hawks.
Frounce.—A disease in the mouth of a hawk.
Gorge.—The 'crop' or first stomach.
Gorge, to.—To satiate with food.
Hack, to fly at.—The state of liberty allowed to young long-winged hawks for some weeks before being trained. Short-winged hawks are not 'hacked'; old falcons are at times, when out of health.
Hack-bells.—Large, heavy bells put on hawks to prevent them preying for themselves when at liberty.

- Haggard.**—A wild-caught, mature hawk.
- Hang on.**—A term synonymous with 'Wait on.'
- Hood.**—The leathern cap used for the purpose of blindfolding, or hoodwinking, hawks.
- Imping.**—Mending broken feathers.
- Jesses.**—Leathern straps fastened to the legs of hawks, and by which they are held.
- Leash.**—The leathern thongs by which hawks are tied up.
- Mews.**—The place in which hawks are kept.
- Mutes.**—The droppings of a hawk.
- Nares.**—The nostrils of a hawk.
- Passage.**—The flight of herons to and from the heronry during the breeding season.
- Passage-hawks.**—Wild hawks taken upon the passage or migration.
- Quarry.**—The game flown at.
- Rake out.**—To fly too wide.
- Raking.**—Striking the game in the air.
- Reclaim.**—To make a hawk gentle and familiar.
- Ring.**—To rise spirally.
- Rouse.**—To shake the feathers.
- Sharp-set.**—Very hungry.
- Stoop or swoop.**—The rapid descent of a falcon from a height on to its prey.
- Tiercel.**—The male peregrine or goshawk.
- Varvels.**—Small rings of silver fastened to the end of the jesses, on which the owner's name, etc., used to be engraved.
- Wait on.**—The hawk soaring in circles above the falconer in expectation of game being sprung.
- Weather.**—To place the hawk in the open air.
- Wind, to sink the.**—To skim near the earth to a certain distance in order to catch the wind and rise up-wind with it.
- Yarak.**—An Eastern term signifying when the short-winged hawks are in hunting condition. The word was introduced by the late Mr. Barker.

PART VI.—GOLF.

The game of golf—The value of the game—Fixed rules to be observed—Learning to swing with driver—Rules for guidance in learning to play—Driving—Approaching—To loft—To run an approach with the cleek—To put cut on—Putting—Match and medal playing—Approach shot—Knée shots—Cut—Professional style of approach—Mr. Hutchinson's plan of stopping a ball dead—Shape of iron club-head—Advice to beginners—Running up the iron—Half-shot or approach of left leg—Three-quarter stroke—Four general rules—On putting—How to grip the putter.

OF recent years the game of golf, which was, with some few exceptions, confined almost entirely to Scotland, being a purely Scotch game, has become very much the fashion in England, and there are now, I may say, but comparatively few English towns, where ground is available to form golf-links, where such do not exist. The wonder is that it has not long ere this been more generally taken up, for it is one of the best of games, and one full of interest, not to say excitement, and which demands considerable skill to excel in. That volume of the Badminton Library which has been recently published respecting the game, treats very fully of it, and speaks of it as being one of the oldest Scottish games.

The value of golf as a game can hardly be over-estimated, for while it is a scientific and withal a manly game, it is one which, when learned, can be played by

young and old ; and so long as a man can walk and has the use of his sight and arms, he can play golf.

I am aware that it is, as a rule, much easier to teach than to practise, and this may be said with all truthfulness of golf, and even an indifferent player may be able to give any amount of good advice thereon. I only aim at endeavouring to impart instruction to a beginner, whether he be young or of middle age. Being, as I have said, a game which even a man of advanced years can play at, it is by no means not worth the while for a man of mature age to commence to learn to play a game at which an old man may excel and beat a younger, still rather is it worth the while of a young man, whose life is all before him, to take advantage of any opportunity he may have of acquiring a knowledge of the game.

There is, however, no royal road to learning golf, any more than in any other game of skill ; but there are certain fixed rules which a beginner should take as a guide, and without these being impressed thoroughly on his mind he will probably acquire a bad style of play, which he will find it very difficult to eradicate. These few simple rules I will endeavour to make as short, easy, and concise as possible.

First of all, it is necessary to learn to swing with a 'driver,' and, needless to remark, the driver must be suitable to the player. This swinging should be practised by the beginner until he can make certain of cutting off the head of a daisy without touching the ground. Thus much having been mastered, the difficulties of golf can be easily overcome if the following short rules are borne in mind.

1. When swinging at the ball, do not jerk or press, but throw your hands into an even swing after the ball when it is struck.

2. Play easily, and from a comfortable position ; the latter will be acquired by practice, and much depends upon the natural formation of the player. Some people stand more astride than others ; but in whatever way a player may elect to place his legs, his position must be an easy one, and square to the line of flight.

3. The ball should be as far from the left toe of the player as the driving club measures from it to his left knee.

4. The head of the club must be square behind the ball, the latter being placed exactly opposite to where the maker's name is stamped on the club, which should always be in the centre of the head of the club.

5. The club must be held tightly with the left hand, the forearm being braced, the elbow slightly bent, so as to prevent the ball being pulled across the desired line of flight (in the same way that a bad cricketer pulls a ball from the off-side on to the near).

6. Sweep the club slowly back, keeping the eyes steadily fixed on the bottom of the back of the ball, and extending the arms out from the body, the instant that the club reaches the furthest point round the shoulders (but not away from them), sweep the club down, without any hitting or jerking, on to the spot the eyes are looking at at the base of the ball, bringing the centre of the club on it as directly as it is possible, the hands following after the ball when the latter is swept away.

7. Play the stroke easily ; do not jerk, or press, or try to go far ; the ball will go far enough.

8. Do not let the eyes leave the spot on which they were fixed, even after the ball has gone, for there are important reasons why this rule should be observed, and to which I will refer later on.

9. Never look at your club as it is brought back in the swing.

10. When playing at the ball, be up.

11. Never give in.

12. Never play a careless or weak shot.

13. And (most important of all) never lose your temper. A man who cannot keep his temper had better give up golf-playing.

DRIVING.

1. In driving, stand with the legs comfortably wide apart, the ball a little inside the left foot, a club's length from the left knee, and the right foot a little behind the left, holding the hands closely together.

2. Sweep the club slowly but firmly back along the ground, the left hand grasping the club very tightly, and the left forearm kept bent throughout the stroke, but as firm as if forming a portion of the club.

3. Keep the feet steady, the left heel as near as possible to the ground, and bring the club swiftly down, without at all stopping its swing behind; let the motion be even, and free from any jerk or forced swing.

4. Let the weight of the body rest on the right leg as the club rises, and gradually raise the weight on to this leg as the club goes back, and at the same time turn out the left heel towards the line of flight, and raising it so as to rest only on the toes of the left foot, which should be turned in towards the direction in

which the club is being drawn back ; when the club falls, the weight is again swung on to the left foot, the *right* heel is raised and the toes of the right foot are pointed towards the line of flight. Throw the hands after the ball, as it were, and never take your eyes from off the spot it was teed for a second after it is hit. The 'caddie' will inform you as to the success or failure of your stroke.

APPROACHING.

Face the hole, keep the left wrist rigid and the right elbow close to the side ; the knees slightly bent, the right forward toe pointing to the line of flight, the left one to the hole ; the right forearm almost resting on the thigh. Play firmly without slicing, and do not try to scoop the ball up.

TO LOFT.

Draw the club-iron back along the ground, and when striking, let the head reach the ball in front of the hands. Sweep the ball, and do not slice it.

TO RUN AN APPROACH WITH THE CLEEK.

Allow the hands to go before the cleek-head and be beyond the ball when the head reaches it. Drag the club with a firm grip and rigid wrists. Don't jerk.

TO PUT CUT ON.

Bring the iron up straight. Hold the right hand tighter than the left. Bring the hands sharply across and towards the body. Keep the heel of the iron well forward and down. Crash into the turf behind the ball.

PUTTING.

This is one of the most important and telling strokes in the game, for a put of three inches is more valuable than a 200 yards' drive. The long drive, although a very satisfactory exploit in one's own estimation, is often as much against a player as for him; for when after the first drive a player finds himself at a distance from the green which is difficult to calculate, it requires the skill of a professional, or a good player in constant practice, to be able to use just exactly the strength requisite to place the ball on the green. It may be a three-quarter or half drive, and either is at times difficult to judge; but if there is any doubt as to which club to use of two approach-irons, it is better, in order to be on the safe side, to use that one which will send the ball the farthest, if there is the least doubt regarding the distance.

In putting, it is absolutely necessary to be up, and the metal putter is the better to use on a good green; but where the latter is at all rough, the wooden is preferable, as with the former the ball hugs the green and is more inclined to go down in the hole than jump over it, as is the case when the wooden putter is used.

The best and the most effectual way to put straight is to get used to the swing and weight of the putter, held firmly with the fingers, the thumb being laid along the club downwards, and not round it. The swing should be practised like the pendulum of a clock until the ball goes on a smooth ground over the exact line which is desired, whether the practice be on a carpet over a line placed upon it, or a line marked

on the green. Constant practice alone will enable the player and putter to work in unison.

Different people stand in different positions, but the best and most successful position is to stand facing the hole, the left foot pointing towards it, and the right almost at right angles to the left, nearly opposite the hole and pointing towards the ball. The whole weight of the body is placed on the right leg, the right arm close to the side. The club must be grasped firmly with the fingers. Now draw it slowly along the ground, pause for a second in order to calculate how far to draw it back to send the ball to the hole, and then strike firmly and let the club follow on after the ball.

In match play, get the lead and keep it. In medal play, do not count your score.

APPROACH SHOTS.

The failing of most players is being too short. The shot is played with the iron, and with rather less than the full swing. Therefore all shots differ, viz.: A. In point of distance; B. In point of elevation; C. In point of style.

There are three kinds of shots for approaching under these different circumstances, viz.:

A.—1. The three-quarter shot; 2. The half shot; 3. The wrist shot.

B.—1. Running the ball up along the line; 2. Lifting with a run; 3. Lifting so as to pitch nearly dead.

C.—1. Ball played with straightforward stroke (the club-head moving in the line of flight of the ball); 2. Ball played with cut (the club-head being pulled across the line of flight).

These theories will help the golfer to a general

practice of them, and later on he will find them serve as a guide to correction when off his game.

The above rules are recommended by H. G. Hutchinson in his treatise on golf in the Badminton Library, and no opinion can be more valuable than his.

The three-quarter stroke is required where the full swing would be too much, and the half-stroke where the three-quarter would be excessive. The nearer the green is for the approach, the nearer the right foot ought to be to the ball.

In all these shots the left shoulder should not swing down, nor should the shoulders swing round as in the full drive. The body must be kept steady and yet not too stiff, and the heels fixed firmly on the ground. The iron should go back as far as the arms will permit, but the shoulders must not go with the swing. So much for the three-quarter stroke.

In the half-shot the right arm from the elbow takes no part in the stroke. It is a stroke played only from the elbow of the right arm, the upper part of the arm being kept close to the side. Swing the club as far back as the wrists and movement of the right forearm will admit, and no farther ; or again, you make a hybrid stroke between a three-quarter and a half shot, which is rarely successful.

If a beginner can play these strokes successfully and conquer the differences and peculiarities of each, he will be making the very best progress towards becoming an efficient golfer.

Approach-shots are the most difficult of all to calculate or play truly. The body must be kept steady in the position I have described, and any swing

of it must be avoided. Some assistance to the swing may be obtained by knuckling in the knees, and swinging from these alone. There is more of a hit than a swing with the wrist-stroke. The club must be firmly gripped. The turn of the wrists is, in fact, more of an upward turn as the club is brought away from the ball, then a back-turn, and, as the club descends, the wrists have to be brought sharply to the position in which they were held while addressing the ball.

A beginner will do well to bring the club away and back again once or twice over the ball with this upward and downward motion of the wrists, in order to see if he understands the movement which is required, before he strikes the ball. The weight in these shots should always be more on the right leg than on the left, but never equally on both. Let the beginner face the hill at an angle of 45° to the line of proposed stroke, his left foot being at a similar angle to that line. The right foot should then be quite close to his left and well in front, and no longer behind the line of flight, as in the case of the drive.

Knee-shots mean, that when the wrist-stroke is liable to be too short to get on the green, the knees may be used so as to aid the swing a little ; thus, by turning the left knee inwards and the right one outwards as the club is coming back, and conversely as it swings forward. The stroke is, or ought to be, exactly the same as the simple wrist-stroke with stiff knees. Until the ball is struck it is the same ; then, however, the motion on the ball slightly differs. The greater length thus given to the swing enables the club to be brought forward so quickly, that the wrists are not

able to control the follow on. It would be too great a jerk for them; therefore the arms must go forward in order to break the extra jar on the wrists, or else the body must be allowed to swing somewhat backwards, with the same object, viz., to save the jar on the wrists. The former method, of allowing the hands to follow after the ball, will make the ball run farther than the latter, because the latter cuts the ball, and it will lie dead, as by pulling the hands towards the body cut is put on the ball.

Cut is caused by drawing the club across the line of flight when hitting the ball, but the former method of allowing the hands to go with the swing is the easier, and balls will not go too far if a very lofted iron or mashie is used, when the ball should lie dead on landing. Many professionals slice these shots, but I do not recommend such practice for beginners.

The following is the professional method of approach, a general one. Stand facing the hole; then, with the arms in the same position as for an ordinary half-shot, lay the iron behind the ball, so that its face is at right angles to the line on which the ball should go; whereupon, if the club is raised in the ordinary manner, and so brought again to the ball, it will be found to travel across the proposed line of flight of the ball. The latter will, nevertheless, fly on a line at right angles to the face of the club as it meets it, and the result will be that the ball is sent straight forward, but spinning like a rifle-bullet from left to right. Hence, when it touches the ground it will spin off to the right, so that it is necessary to make allowance for this spinning movement by aiming to the left of the hole.

Hard ground is against successful cutting, as the

moment the iron touches it, it shoots off anywhere but the right way, without getting the ball true.

Loose sand is also treacherous, and the grip of the iron must be shortened and held firmly, and the sand must be struck just under the ball, so as to shoot the latter up out of the sand-hole or bunker.

There is no necessity on such occasions to do more than to put out on good ground, close by where the spoon or brassie or cleek can be used to send it far away, and make up for a lost stroke. If too much is tried in a bunker, a miss will follow, or worse still, the ball is placed under the bank of the bunker.

There is a certain method by which Mr. Hutchinson explains that a ball can be made to stop dead, better than by any other means. It is a very difficult stroke, and should be well practised before trying it on in a match. We will suppose that the hole is close to the side of an intervening bunker. The position is the same as for the half stroke, but the right hand is held loosely, for the club, wielded by the grip of the left hand and the turn of the left wrist, is allowed to turn up on the web between the right thumb and forefinger, the right hand being moved but very slightly from the position it was in when the ball was being addressed. The club is thus raised straighter from the ball than it can be by any other means. As it is brought down, the arms must not be allowed to swing any farther than back to the same position in which they were when the ball was being addressed, and the stroke, rather across the ball than straight forward, is to be finished up by the wrists alone. This stroke is seldom resorted to except in case of emergency. The more loosely the club is held (provided it is held accu-

rately), the more dead the ball will fall. But it is dangerous to hold the club loosely.

The best players I know prefer to use the very lofted iron to the above difficult stroke. The difficulty of the mashie is, that although you may obtain elevation and dead-fall, it is difficult to get as far as you require.

Much depends on the shape of the head and the degree of its turn-up, and practice alone will enable a player to use his club to the best advantage.

‘Never to hurry off after your stroke’ is an important piece of advice. Many players, I fear I must include myself also, are in the habit of moving off their position before the ball is fairly struck. It is well to try the opposite extreme, and pause for a moment in the position you were in at the finish of the stroke. I advise a beginner to hold his gun on the bird he has missed, in order to find out why he did so. The same rule holds good at golf. Pause, and look at the spot where the ball was, and if a mistake has been made endeavour to ascertain the reason.

‘RUNNING UP THE IRON.’

This is played at about the same distance as the ‘half-shot’ or the ‘wrist-shot’; though it is not a ‘wrist-shot,’ it is a ‘body-stroke.’ The position is the same as for the ‘half-shot’ proper, but the ball is placed more to the right and a little farther from the player. The right elbow is not bent in to the body, nor is the right forearm to almost rest on the thigh, but the hands are to be brought out and away from the body, and a little forward. This will have the effect of presenting the face of the iron more upright to the ball.

The swing-back is then made almost entirely by the body turning on the hips and left knee ; the points of the fingers, wrists, arms, and shoulders being all kept rigid. The arms being still kept nearly straight, as when addressing the ball, the club will go back close over the surface of the ground. The club is brought back by a similar reverse turn of the body, and as the ball is struck, it follows on after it by reason of the right shoulder being brought underneath (though rather by the body bending down off the right hip than by any slackening of the shoulder-joints), and by the whole body being allowed to follow on with the inward bend of the right knee. The ball thus struck will be sent skimming close over the ground for the earlier portion of its journey, and will then run on up the slope on to the 'putting green,' dead, and perhaps 'in.'

HALF-SHOT, OR APPROACH OFF THE LEFT LEG.

The position is much the same as in the drive, except that the weight is all on the left leg, and the ball opposite the left toe. The mashie, being the shorter, is the best approach club to hit a ball close to the player.

The weight in the stroke does not get shifted to the right leg at all ; the knees are bent, the left more than the right. The main part of the stroke is done with the left hand and wrist, it being necessary that the right wrist should be loose, or otherwise the club cannot get away after the ball.

Again, if the ball has to be 'lofted,' the left arm must not be allowed to follow on, but the club be allowed to come through by the supple action of the

left wrist only. It is possible to put cut on the ball, but not too much. Clubs are best with plenty of loft. Hitting the ball slightly on the heel of the club is a method which those who play this stroke off the right leg employ, as an additional means of putting on cut. This 'heeling' is chiefly practised by left-leg players.

The three-quarter stroke is a most important one. It is really a stroke played with the whole swing of the arms, from and below the shoulder. The wrists do not take part in the stroke in the same way as in the half-shot, and shorter wrist-strokes. The wrists must be taut throughout this stroke; and when the ball is struck the club should be allowed to follow on after it, by the following on of the arms. It is a stiffish stroke; even the elbows should not be lissome. The swing is given entirely by the arms working on the joints of the shoulders. The shoulder-blades must be kept taut, and not allowed to swing round as in the drive.

In the three-quarter drive the object should be to send the ball as far as possible, without taking a full swing. It is a very uncomfortable distance to play. The club must be gripped firmly in both hands, the first section of the right forefinger pressing hard on the leather. Here, again, the club does not require to move in the right hand. In order to make this stroke successfully, let the swing finish itself naturally well out before attempting to bring the club forward again. Even a little *extra* dwelling on the top of the swing does not matter in this stroke, and it is advantageous, inasmuch as it serves to aid accuracy.—*Hutchinson.*

FOUR GENERAL RULES.

1. Do not take your eye off the ball.
2. Do not aim too long.
3. Aim to pitch to the left of the hole.
4. And, the most important of all, Be up.

ON PUTTING.

The ball must be hit true. The eye must be kept on the ball and not on the hole (no matter how close it may be to it).

The best way to select a true line is by kneeling down behind the ball, and also before the ball from the off-side of the hole, and study the 'lie' of the ground, taking some mark between the ball and the hole, which is the true line play for the mark, and not the hole. But first, judge of the strength required to get into the hole beyond the mark. This is done by the distance that the 'putter' is drawn behind the ball, the centre of it having been squared on the ball. Rest a second when it is drawn to the distance guessed, before striking. The right hand should be lower down on the shaft, and holding more tightly than the left, and the club should follow the hit, which must be firmly given.

It requires some considerable practice before a putter is, as it should be, made part and parcel of the player. He should learn to know the true swing in line and balance before he tries it on a green. This can be learned on the floor of any uncarpeted room, where the lines on the floor will serve as a guide to

swinging straight. The putter should be held with an equal grip with both hands, the right being tighter than the left. The wrists should be used in putting. Now, when swinging with the wrists, backwards and forwards, if it work well and truly over the line, well and good, but this it is certain not to do at first. If it work across the line from outwards to inwards, the left foot must be advanced and the right drawn back. If the club-head works from inside the line as it is drawn back, to outside as it is swung forward, the left foot must be drawn back and the right advanced. The hands must always work the putter in the way which is most natural for them.

After a correct swing over the line has been acquired by practice, the beginner should carefully observe the position of his feet and that of the imaginary ball.

HOW TO GRIP THE PUTTER.

The putter must be held well in the fingers, not home in the palms of the hands, and the thumbs should be laid along the side in order to steady the swing and guide it straight. There must be no jerk whatever about it; the club must be drawn quietly back, and when ready, the beginner must move quietly forward again, so as not to lose the line. The club should be held just tight enough to prevent its loosing itself from the grip of the fingers when it meets the ball. A clean and true hit will give out a sharp, clear, and welcome sound—a clear-sounding, sharp click. After waggling over a ball with any club, the latter should be rested on the ground for a second before drawing it back for the stroke, except in a bunker, where nothing but the

ball must be touched in striking. The head of any club should always be thus held accurately and close to the ball before striking, and it is absolutely necessary to do so for straight putting.

THE END.



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